

Kevin Kiely b. Northern Ireland [www.kevinkiely.com](http://www.kevinkiely.com)

**Publications—(Selected):**

**Poetry**

*Breakfast with Sylvia* Lagan Press Belfast 2005

*Plainchant for a Sundering* (long-poem) Lapwing Press Belfast 2001

4 poems in *Something Sensational To Read in the Train* (anthology foreword: Brendan Kennelly) Lemon Soap Press, Dublin 2005

2 poems in *Catullus: One Man of Verona* anthology ed. Ronan Sheehan (forthcoming)

4 poems in *Pound Conference Papers* ed. William Pratt, Ohio University Press (forthcoming)

**Novels**

*Quintesse* St Martin's Press New York 1985 (Irish Edition Co-Op Books, Dublin 1982  
(Gavin Witt English Major Yale University wrote a study of *Quintesse*, 1988)

*Mere Mortals* Poolbeg Dublin 1989 (Short-List Hughes & Hughes Fiction Prize 1990)

*A Horse Called El Dorado* O'Brien Press Dublin 2005 (Bisto Honour Award, 2006)

*Pieta* (short fiction) *The Anthology* ed. Leland Bardwell Co-Op Books Dublin 1982

**Plays**

*Children of No Importance* RTE 2000 Commissioned for Wilde centenary

*Multiple Indiscretions* RTE 1997

**Awards Qualifications Work:**

Fulbright Scholar in Residence Boise State University, Idaho 2007-2008

The Patrick Kavanagh Fellowship in Poetry 2006

Adjudicator: Feile Filíochta (International Poetry Festival) Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (Co. Dublin) 2002, 2006

Literary Editor *Books Ireland New Writing* 1996-2001; Assistant Editor *Books Ireland* 2001–2005

Arts Council Bursary Awards-in-Literature: 1980 1989 1990 1998 1999 and 2004

Master of Philosophy in Creative Writing, Trinity College, Dublin 2005—moderator: Brendan Kennelly

Ezra Pound Conference: Sorbonne, Paris 2001 conference paper title 'Pound and the Irish'

Literature and Poetry Lectures Blackrock Technical College, Ireland 1989/90

Honorary Fellow-in-Writing University of Iowa 1983—moderators: Paul Engel, Gary Snyder, Galway Kinnell, Marvin Bell and Jorie Graham; and Translation From Other Languages Workshops.

Lectures on Pound, Yeats, Joyce, Shaw, Beckett British Institute Barcelona, Spain 1979/80

Diploma in Creative Writing University College Galway 1977—moderators: Francis Stuart, Anthony Cronin & Aidan Higgins

**Book-critic/reviews/articles:** Hibernia, Irish Examiner, Irish Studies Review, Honest Ulsterman, Fortnight, Books Ireland (critic: 1996-2005), The London Magazine, The Irish Book Review, Poetry Ireland Review, Irish Times, Irish Arts Review: Commissioned articles for 2007: Irish Times

**Recent poems in** The Edinburgh Review, Poetry Ireland Review, Adrift (New York), Foolscape (London), Oasis (London), Acumen (UK), Other Poetry (UK), Cyphers, The Literary Review (New Jersey), Chapman (Scotland), Southword, Cork Literary Review, The Black Mountain Review, The Shop, Fortnight, Storm (Scotland), Touchstone (UK), Stony Thursday Book, Kritiya, The Irish American Magazine. Public Readings at venues: US, Ireland, Spain & Italy

**Current Projects**

PhD on John Lincoln Sweeney (see next entry) with Professor Andrew Carpenter, Head of the Faculty of English and Drama, University College Dublin

Poems towards a collection; 'S.O.S. Lusitania' novel for young readers commissioned by O'Brien Press; adaptation of radio play *Children of No Importance* for theatre production

'Language and Persona in the *Pisan Cantos*' *Ezra Pound Conference Papers International* ed. William Pratt, Ohio University forthcoming

*Francis Stuart: Outcast & Artist* Liffey Press, Dublin (forthcoming)

*Critical Excerpts (Selected):*

**Breakfast with Sylvia** (Lagan Press, Belfast, 2005)

'Kevin Kiely, like quite a few of his literary contemporaries, has a reputation as strong in Europe and the US as it is here.'

—James J. McAuley *The Irish Times* 2005

'Kiely jolts us into another dimension of language, where speech is worked like molten metal, throwing off sparks, allusions, memories and experiences. Yet through the pyrotechnics shines the cool winter light of Donegal.'

—Barbara Ellis *Iota* (London) 2006

'Here poetry redeems itself in Kiely's assured perspective. The title poem is in two parts which, if they were music, must resonate of Bach.'

—Tommy Frank O'Connor *Studies* Spring 2006

'Successful is his series about famous artistic personalities. The mix is eclectic: 'Requiem for Kurt Cobain' sits between 'Who's Afraid of Ezra Pound?' and 'Skimming Sam Beckett, while Ovid, Buddha, and Coleridge all inspire poems of their own.'

—Val Nolan *Poetry Ireland Review* 2006

'Lyrical, original, faithful to the moment and its joys but with an undertone of sometimes rueful experience—these are the poems of a man who has come through.'

—Anthony Cronin

'These poems are full of edgily real things, people and places caught in a sudden urgent perspective that shakes the reader with their nearness. A poem such as 'On a deserted beach with a Sony Walkman', succeeds in doing this simultaneously with the material world and with emotions and ideas about art. There is nothing glum or staid here and much that is invigorating to read.'

—Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin

'The mythic mingles with the realistic, the spiritual touches the material world, the robust sexuality of many of the poems lies side by side with moments of delicate reticence. There's an energetic awareness of, and participation in the joy of being.'

—Brendan Kennelly

**Quintesse** (Co-Op Books, Dublin, 1982; Reissued St Martin's Press, New York, 1985)

'There will be those who'll say it's a cop out, and those who'll say it's a manifesto; those who'll say it's a fragment, and those who'll say it's a bible. There will be those who'll say it's drunk on its own excesses; and those who'll say this very delirium is its greatness.'

—Aubrey Dillon-Malone *The Evening Herald*.

'Neither slick nor over-clever, betraying all the ingredients of the genuine fools of literature in whom an unconscious nobility rather than rebellion is the mainspring.'

—Gillman Noonan *The Irish Times*

'Kiely's prose presents a stream of surreal images, evoking an Ireland that is part real and part literary tradition.'

—Stephen H *Cape Library Journal New York*

'As did the mature Nabokov in *Ada*, the novice Kiely offers a sort of palimpsest of erotic memories, in which old experience glimmers beneath the surface of new.'

—Stephen Whittaker *Best Seller New York*

‘This first novel has quite a simple plot, I have read it three times to establish this, and it was worth it.’

—Gerry Colgan *The Irish Independent*

**Plainchant for a Sundering** (Lapwing Press, Belfast, 2001)

‘Kiely’s style—and the liberty of his voice—has more to do with those few Irish poets who have been exposed to a working European modernity; the work is given its head, allowed to find its own form. This is dark, almost Gothic stuff, not for the poetically squeamish.’

—Fred Johnston *Poetry Ireland Review*

‘Transformations, here, do not come through language—rather language is being used to expound and delineate very personal transformations.’

—Ross Moore *The Burning Bush*

**Mere Mortals** (Poolbeg, Dublin, 1989) Hughes & Hughes Fiction Prize Shortlist 1990

‘He co-ordinates the levels of his material with an efficiency underscored by darker shades of absurdity, and flagellates the Irish educational system along the way.’

—Ashling Maguire *The Irish Times*

‘A nerve-centre through which the daily affairs of small-town living are relayed, which makes for an auspicious starting point.’

—Mary O’Donnell *The Sunday Tribune*

‘I refer to the lyrical, almost mythic sequence describing the origins of the Arch and at the end a beautiful portrayal of two elderly widows which transcends its pretentious title (Sisters at Sunset in B Flat Minor).’

—John Dunne *The Irish Literary Supplement USA*

‘The prose has something of the intuitive feel of Henry Green’s novella *Loving*; it is worth reading for the subtle movement of thought-packed language alone.’

—Bruce Stewart *Books Ireland*

‘These books are for people who are bored with ordinary novels, and who want to read a distinctively Irish version of the modern. They are demotic in the way they assume they do not constitute an arcane taste; as any whiff of privilege is aggressively dispelled...and undermining of highbrow pretensions creates a bond of complicity.’

—J. C. C. Mays *Alpha*

‘Earnestness of feeling, set down in a ‘therapoetic’ mode.’

—Peter Denman *Books Ireland*

**A Horse Called El Dorado** (O’Brien Press, 2005) Bisto Honour Award Winner 2006; Shortlisted for Scottish Highland Children’s Book Awards (Scotland) 2006

‘The hazardous journey from Colombia to Ireland: a story of dreams and our need to fulfill them.’

—Robert Dunbar *The Irish Times*

'Another brilliant contribution to the list of excellent...'

—Tony Hickey *Village*

'Pepe's adventure makes this story memorable, but the warm, less-than-perfect characters make it exceptional.'

—Paddy O'Doherty's Editor's Choice *Inis-Children's Books Ireland*

'Dramatic events in Colombia begin this story, that is full of adventure, horses and action. Strongly written, it is beautifully atmospheric.'

—*Children's Book News (UK)*