

[Free] Stones of Aran: Labyrinth

## Stones of Aran: Labyrinth

*Tim Robinson*

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**Tim Robinson : Stones of Aran: Labyrinth** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stones of Aran: Labyrinth:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Celtic Lassgreat material, thought provoking1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. No one is a more interesting and capable writer than ...By Glenn CaseyNo one is a more interesting and capable writer than Tim Robinson. I have read almost all of his books and have often used his maps of Inishmor and The Burren.8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. "Too often, in writing of

Aran, I am writing elegies unawares." By John P. Jones III Tim Robinson first moved to Aran, an island 8 miles long and 2 miles wide, located just off the west coast of Ireland, near Galway Bay, in 1972. He wrote his first book on the island, "Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage," which recounts his walk around the island's perimeter, with, for sure, plenty of diversions. I have previously reviewed "Pilgrimage" at , and said, in part that: "He ranges over disciplines as varied as cosmology, geology, botany, sociology, history, linguists, economics, anthropology and literature." At first glance, one would believe that one book on such a small island would be sufficient. But no, Robinson has so much more to say in "Labyrinth," as he examines the island's interior. One aspect is the subject sentence, for he is documenting a vanishing way of life. Elegies unawares relates to his description of Evelyn's shop, the last one on the island, and he notes that he no sooner described it than she retired, and the last shop closed. "Bad reviews" can often provide the motivation for reading a book, even more than good ones. Robinson includes a bad review of "Pilgrimage" in "Labyrinth," which is written from the point of view of some impossible academic twit, who objects to Robinson's "polymath" generalist approach to knowledge, as opposed to the "rigors" of narrow specialization. The review reeks of condescension: "Such failings are only to be expected; a multidisciplinary study demands the modesty of teamwork, and the best that can be said of Robinson's attempts is that he manages to fall between more professorial chairs than most amateurs." Or, "Striding roughshod over the bounds of specialisms and genres, it seems to imply that some overarching meaning of it all is going to be revealed... Robinson ends up being nothing in particular." Of course, one assumes that the review is not apocryphal, but even if it is, Robinson captures the essence of the academic specialists proudly defensive of their turf against the generalist. Robinson "nailed" the tourist also, of a particular nationality, who came to the island, and said: "We would like to see something, if there is anything to be seen!" Robinson retorts: "That what was to be seen was exactly this grudging parceling-out of barrenness, was more than I could explain." As in "Pilgrimage," Robinson's prose and insights continue to dazzle. Consider: "Time, in such places as London, is a disease of the wristbone; one see sufferers glance anxiously at the glittering lump. I had come to Aran to escape the infection, and bitterly resented its outbreak here." Or: "The sun, on a rococo stage of lavishly gilded cirrus, was retiring with the bravura of a diva well practiced in farewell performances." And then he goes on to give a concise and accurate description of "the green flash" at sunset. Or: "If one waits by the well until the turbidity of the mind settles, then the scratching of a bramble stirred across the rock gives one ground to stand on..." Robinson concludes the book on a typically strong, yet self-deprecating note: "The virtue of reality is that no understanding is equal to it; no walk, however labyrinthine, wears out the stone... Perhaps when I open it (his book) in seven year's tome it will tell me what I had hoped to learn by writing it, how to match one's step to the pitch and roll of this cracked stone boat of a cosmos; but for the time being I cannot read it." Robinson has written another masterpiece. Kudos to the New York Review Books Classics for re-issuing it.

A companion volume to STONES OF ARAN: PILGRIMAGE, an exploration of the human and natural work of the exterior of the island of Aran.

I do not believe there is another book in the world like it. . . . Robinson has achieved the impossible: by taking a geographical reality, describing it so meticulously, and embedding it in a past of folktales, legends, and history he has thwarted the transience of at least one small part of the globe. Cees Nootboom One of the most sustained, intensive, and imaginative studies of a landscape that has ever been carried out. . . . As with all great landscape works, it is at once territorially specific and utterly mythic. Robert Macfarlane "A loving anatomy of the largest of the Aran Islands off the West Coast of Ireland, in which the point where nature and culture meet in the island is observed with great beauty and precision." Colm Toibin "Tim Robinson's maps and books honor the landscapes they describe. As invitations, they irresistibly beckon the archeologist, botanist, geologist, bird-watcher, folklorist, student of the Irish language, or just plain tourist." Chet Raymo. "Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage and Labyrinth... is a necessity for all visitors and walkers." --Guardian "Tim Robinson is an artist and mapmaker and has spent years charting the coasts of Connemara and the Burren. I came across his books in a Galway shop. In typical Irish fashion, somebody told me where he lived and that I should call by. So I did, met Robinson, bought one of his black-and-white maps and went off walking. His remarkable book is a fascinating meditation on the geology, spatial and mythical life of the islands and makes you feel that Robinson has personally met and considered every boulder in the plane." Gwyneth Lewis, The Independent The Aran Islands off the west coast of Ireland have captured the imagination of many artists and writers, from Robert Flaherty's film Man of Aran to two dazzling books by historian, geographer and map-maker Tim Robinson Stones of Aran: Pilgrimage and Stones of Aran: Labyrinth. With their attention to everything from underlying geology to botanical minutiae and the long-forgotten genesis of place names, these books are profound investigations of the inhabited landscape. Architects Journal "An exquisitely detailed portrait of a special landscape, this is a gem-like addition to the travel genre." Publishers Weekly "Robinson takes the reader on a meditative walking tour of Aran... [he] seeks the essence of an increasingly distant Celtic past... like a visitor peering through the warped and colored glass of an ancient church window." Los Angeles Times "A kind of travel writing The New Yorker sometimes sponsors: a virtuosity of gratuitous fact-gathering, a penitential recording of minutiae, a recitation of

information as if it were prayer." New York Times"Looked upon with a tactful, eager, strategic care that is as tender in its address as an admission of love...Robinsons Aran will, inevitably, become part of the general myth. It is a wonderful achievement." Seamus Deane, London of Books"The best book ever written by an Englishman about Ireland." Independent"One of the most original, revelatory and exhilarating works of literature ever produced in Ireland." Irish Times"Rapt, encyclopedic volumes...Robinson has done for the west of Ireland what Ruskin did for Venice, Proust for the voids and vasts of time." TelegraphStones of Aran seems to me one of the most significant pieces of prose, from a literary point of view, written in Ireland in the past quarter-century. J.C.C. Mays, Poetry IrelandA rich and a great book. Robinson has evoked the spirit of the place in its starkness, beauty, and endurance. George Mackay Brown, The Tablet"Climate and location, flora and fauna, culture, myth and legend, people, and over it all, the veneer of language and place name...Tim Robinson achieves this ultimate map in Stones of Aran" New Scientist"Stones of Aran warms cold geology into fervent life. Robinsons chosen form is wholly irresistible." Observer"One of the most interesting and important books produced in Ireland in the twentieth century. In prose as layered and rich as the area he explores, Robinson deals with space in the way Proust deals with time." Sean DunneRobinson set out to record in diary form the geology and history, the language and placenames and folklore of the island. The Washington PostRobinsons language is fastidiously and finely wrought. It draws the reader on, hypnotically, not merely into Arans fantastic interface of rock and sea, but into a revelation of total environment. Michel Viney, The Irish TimesAbout the AuthorTim Robinson was born in 1935 and brought up in Yorkshire, England. He studied mathematics at Cambridge and worked as a teacher and artist in Istanbul, Vienna, and London. In 1972 he moved to the Aran Islands to write and make maps. He now lives in Roundstone, County Galway. Among his books are Setting Foot on the Shores of Connemara and Other Writings (1996), My Time in Space (2001), Tales and Imaginings (2002), and two volumes of a projected trilogy, Connemara: Listening to the Wind (2006) and Connemara: The Last Pool of Darkness (2008). His Folding Landscape Project, which won a major European Conservation Award in 1987, has produced radically new maps of the Burren in County Clare, the Aran Islands, and Connemara.John Elder lives in Vermont, where he teaches at Middlebury College and operates a sugar bush with his family. His books include Reading the Mountains of Home and The Frog Run.