IRISH & IRISH-AMERICAN
WOMEN AUTHORS

SELECTED BOOKS

An Annotated Bibliography
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Ask anyone to list their favorite Irish and Irish-American authors, and most likely you will get a list that is predominately male. According to Sally Barr Ebest in her article, “These Traits Also Endure,” many Irish anthologies and collections will focus on male authors. The following selection of titles covers contemporary Irish and Irish-American female writers with novels reflecting the Irish and Irish-American experience. Also included are short story anthologies with selected fiction by Irish and Irish American women. While this list can be shared at any time of the year, these books would feature best during March which would not only highlight St. Patrick’s Day, but Women’s History Month as well.

Writers from Ireland


After years of witnessing Ireland’s political struggles, a woman decides to forego her support of the IRA when a member beats a young boy.
Binchy, Maeve. *Firefly Summer.*
   A small quiet town in Ireland unexpectedly receives news that a wealthy Irish-American businessman will be building a fancy hotel.

   A married Dublin woman begins a correspondence with an imprisoned bank robber in order to alleviate boredom in her mundane life.

   A young woman mourns her brother’s suicide and tries to come to terms with a traumatizing memory from her childhood.

*A Green and Mortal Sound: Short Fiction by Irish Women Writers.*
   A collection of short fiction writing that highlights notable Irish authors such as Edna O’Brien, Julia O’Faolain, and Elizabeth Bowen.

Haverty, Anne. *One Day as a Tiger.*
   Two brothers return to their family’s farm after their parents are killed in a car accident, and start raising genetically engineered sheep.

*Irish Girls About Town: An Anthology of Short Stories.*
   A collection of short stories featuring many of Ireland’s bestselling authors. Included in the collection are Maeve Binchy, Marian Keyes, and Cathy Kelly.
Johnston, Jennifer. *Shadows on Our Skin.*
   A young Catholic boy befriends a teacher in British-occupied Derry, but becomes jealous when she takes an interest in his older brother.

Kilroy, Claire. *Tenderwire.*
   A violinist uses her father's money to invest in an illegal purchase of a rare violin.

   A young soldier chronicles the events and his involvement in the Easter Rebellion of 1916.

   The first book in O'Brien's Country Girls trilogy tells the story of Kate and Baba, who move from the country to the big city to find love and start new lives.
Irish American Writers

**Cabbage and Bones: An Anthology of Irish American Women's Fiction.** Caledonia Kearns, Ed.
This collection of short stories features Irish American women's fiction written between 1938 and 1997. Included are well-known writers such as Mary McCarthy, Maureen Howard, and Tess Gallagher, and lesser-known writers.

An Irish American family gathers together one summer as their mother lies in a coma.

Gordon, Mary. *Pearl.*
An American mother flies to Ireland in order to save her daughter from a hunger strike.

Howard, Maureen. *Bridgeport Bus.*
Mary Agnes Keely escapes her small town home of Bridgeport, Connecticut, to live and work in New York City. Mary becomes pregnant after an affair and is forced back to Bridgeport to live with her mother.

Kelly, Mary Pat. *Galway Bay.*
The Kelly family leaves Ireland for Chicago during the 19th century potato famine.
McDermott, Alice. *Charming Billy*.

Charlie Lynch has been led to believe that the love of his life has died in Ireland, but receives some shocking information years later as he tries to overcome his battle with alcoholism.

Morris, Mary McGarry. *Songs in Ordinary Time*.

A divorced woman from Vermont takes care of her three children and naively invites a con man into her home.


A Southern woman pregnant with her fifth child contemplates having an affair during the time period of JFK’s assassination.