



## PRESS RELEASE

# *Call Mother a Lonely Field*

Liam Carson

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*Call Mother a Lonely Field* mines the emotional archaeology of family, home and language, our attempts to break their tethers, and the refuge we take within them. In this memoir, Liam Carson confronts the complex relationship between a son thinking in English, a father dreaming in Irish 'in a room just off the reality I knew', and a mother who, after raising five children through Irish, is no longer comfortable speaking it in the violent reality of 1970s Belfast.

We experience the author's childhood through still-present echoes of the Second World War, dystopian science fiction, American comic books and punk. At the same time he explores how language, literature and stories are transmitted *ó bhéal go béal*, from mouth to mouth. Only after years in London and Dublin and the deaths of his parents will he begin to heal his own fractured relationship with Irish through literature.

Against this background, Carson's rediscovery of Irish as a *tearmann* or sanctuary is a haunting testament to the potency of our own vanishing worlds, with implications reaching far beyond the experiences of one family or city.

*'In this perfect gem of a memoir Liam Carson invites us into an Irish-speaking family home that was a bastion against the evils of imperialism, both cultural and material. Liam Óg's story is one of setting out and return. For him, as for his father, Ithaca is not a place but a language. Like Hugo Hamilton's The Speckled People, this memoir is a must-read.'*

—NUALA NÍ DHOMHNAILL

*'Raymond Carver used to say one good short story was worth any number of bad novels. So with Liam Carson's short pearl of a book—worth any number of heavy tomes... The book scoops up hot embers and implosive elements of a time when language became a kind of lightning rod and secret preserve for the spirit.'*

—TESS GALLAGHER

*'Carson's account of growing up in a household where Irish provided a psychological anchor in a world of childhood that is dream and reality in equal parts is both incisive and moving... This is a deeply satisfying narrative that avoids the false sentimentality that indulges itself in lionising the past or in demonising it.'*

—LOUIS DE PAOR

**LIAM CARSON** was born in 1962. His father, the late Liam Mac Carráin, was well-known as a postman, Irish-language and Esperanto activist, writer and much-loved storyteller.

Liam was educated at St Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School in Belfast before going on to study English literature and philosophy at UCD, where he was an elected students' union councillor and auditor of the Contemporary Music Society.

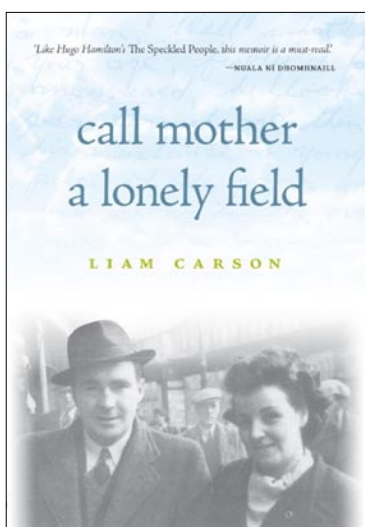
During the 1980s he lived in squats in Brixton and Kennington in London. During this period he worked as a civil servant, labourer, dishwasher, and painter and decorator.

Liam is the director of the IMRAM Irish Language Literature Festival, which he founded in 2004. The festival aims to take its audiences on a 'voyage of discovery' that reveals the diversity of modern Irish-language literature through imaginative and eclectic events. Key IMRAM projects have included the Gaelic Jazz Project—a radical fusion of jazz, sound sculpture and poetry—and The Magic Swirling Ship/The Dylan Project, in which poets Gabriel Rosenstock and Colm Breathnach translated Bob Dylan's work into Irish. The songs were then arranged by stellar producer and guitarist Steve Cooney and sung by Liam Ó Maonlaoi of the Hothouse Flowers and Caoimhín Mac Giolla Catháin of Bréag. IMRAM has attracted major authors such as Paul Muldoon, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Biddy Jenkinson and Dermot Somers.

Over the past twenty years, Liam has also worked as a literary publicist for many Irish publishers—including Lilliput, Blackstaff, Wolfhound, Mercier, and Cois Life. Authors he has worked with include Paul Durcan, John Waters, the late John Moriarty, Ken Bruen, Liam Ó Muirthile, Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, Fionnuala O Connor and Jonathan Bardon.

His reviews, critical articles, essays and poems have appeared in a wide range of periodicals, including *Poetry Ireland Review*, *Fortnight*, *The Irish Review*, *New Hibernia Review*, *Comhar*, *An Guth*, *Irish Examiner* and *Sunday Tribune*.

He lives in Dublin with his partner, Niamh Lawlor, a puppeteer, and their daughter, Eithne. He is well known for talking at length about Bob Dylan after a few pints.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**, or to arrange an interview with the author, please contact Marsha Swan at [info@hagsheadpress.com](mailto:info@hagsheadpress.com) or +353 (0)87 6591491. Author photographs and the cover are available to download as high-resolution jpegs at: [www.hagsheadpress.com/press.html](http://www.hagsheadpress.com/press.html)

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