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Stones of Aran: Labyrinth. Tim Robinson. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1995, 495 pages, £Ir20 hard.

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Tim Robinson is that fortuitous anomaly, a writer and thinker possessed of both the artistic and the scientific temperaments, a genius able to fuse those two twentieth century "cultures": science and the humanities. Born in Yorkshire, Robinson studied mathematics at Cambridge, taught in Istanbul, worked as an artist in Vienna and London, and moved to the Aran Islands in 1972, where he gained fame as a map maker and writer. He also learned Irish (Gaeilge), began preserving Irish place names, displayed immense talents as a naturalist, won respect as an environmentalist, winning the Ford European Conservation Award. He brings his varied and impressive talents to *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth*, the second volume of his remarkable masterpiece, a multifaceted study of Aráinn, the largest of the Aran Islands, three barren limestone rocks at the mouth of Galway Bay, with little soil, a labyrinth of stone walls (nearly 1500 miles worth by Robinson's calculations), and an unusual and perpetual appeal. The islands have attracted saints, archaeologists, anthropologists, linguists, ethnographers, folklorists, writers, poets, madmen, Irish nationalists, and for the last 150 years or so, tourists, in exceptional numbers. Aran is Robinson's shorthand for the three Aran islands: Árainn, Inis Meáin, and Inis Oírr. Aran is also an abbreviation "for that unsummable totality of human perspectives upon them, which is my real subject." The Irish, and perhaps most Europeans, are well aware of Aran's charm and unique allure, as indicated by the reception of *Pilgrimage*, the first volume of *Stones of Aran*, which was not only enthusiastically reviewed, but won two major literary awards. The second volume is, if anything, more miraculous than the first. Surely this miracle can make an Atlantic passage and gain the wider fame it deserves, for if the physical subject is relatively small, the implications Robinson discovers there are immense.

The impossibility of summarizing *Labyrinth* mirrors the artistic problem Robinson set for himself, an adequate examination of even "a limited patch of this globe." That patch, Aráinn (anglicized and increasingly known as Inishmore, "big island"), is approximately nine miles long and less than two and half miles across at its widest point, with a population of less than eight hundred people. Surely such a small subject, "of the world's countless facets one of the most finely carved by nature, closely structured by labour and minutely commented by tradition, is *the*

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exemplary terrain upon which to dream of that work, the guidebook to the adequate step." The reader, in *Stones of Aran: Labyrinth*, accompanies a discerning and peripatetic philosopher, Robinson, through the interior of the island (*Pilgrimage* made a circuit of its coast), as he walks "this paradigm of broken, blessed, Pangaea." Pangaea is "all-earth," the name given by scientists to the single land mass from which all continents and islands have disengaged. Robinson's notion of the adequate step is one which "is as adequate to the ground it clears as is the dolphin's arc to its wave." For Robinson, in an epiphaniacal moment felt in the leap of Dolphins off Aran's shore "an instance of wholeness beyond happiness." But "the dolphin's world is endlessly more continuous and therefore productive of unity than ours, our craggy, boggy overgrown and overbuilt terrain on which every step carries us across geologies, biologies, myths, histories, politics, etcetera" and "trips us with the trailing *Rosa spinosissima* of personal associations," so that an awareness of "these dimensions of the step . . . equal to the involuted complexities under foot at any given moment would be a crushing backload to have to carry." In a sense, Robinson carries these dimensions of the step for the reader, and stepping through landscape, he arranges the most striking aspects of those dimensions for our enlightenment and pleasure. The reader is beneficiary of the thousands of steps he has taken through the labyrinth of Aran, observing not just the physical present, but the myriad "fading mazes of the past" discernible in any moment of the present, and picking among the nearly infinite "crossroads of perception . . . in incalculable permutations with those of the physical path."

Consider the second short section of *Labyrinth*, "Maidenhair," in which a small fern provides an introduction to both Aran and Robinson's method. Robinson's eye sorts out individual fronds from "greyish green flakes floating in an elaborate and dishevelled pattern." On closer look, each frond breaks up into "triangular sprays of five or six leaflets the size of a little fingernail." He then describes each leaflet, the stalk, the stems, which are "so slender that the fronds bend outward under their own weight." "The articulations are so delicate that a breath is enough to start a flickering fan-language of display and concealment, chaste provocation, coquetry — or so one reads it, prompted by the fern's English name." The eye discerns the plants from the shade, the name alters the experience of seeing, so that the movement of the ferns is poetic, humanized. Our Aran guide shifts guise from naturalist to wordsmith, commenting on the psychology of language. Robinson quickly alters the perspective, viewing the fern through the lens of its Irish name: *dúchosach, black footed*, which takes us to the root, the plant's attachment to the very earth. "Part the foliage and see how the wire-thin stalks emerge in a dense bundle like a jet of earth-force from a crack in the rock . . . the peasant, sturdily rooted in the compost of its ancestors." And yet a third name, "*Adiantum capillus-veneris* (to take up its Linnaean binomial as one would a magnifying glass for scientific objectification)," generates discourse on the "earliest Irish record" of the plant, as well as the scientist who recorded it, Edward Lhuyd, Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford who visited Aran around 1700 "in connection with the preparation of his great work *Archaeologia Britannica*." Lhuyd recorded the Irish name as *Dúv-xofax*, "which perhaps records the rusty voice of some Araner of nearly three hundred years ago." Yet a fourth name for the plant expands the historical dimension: *tae scailpreach*, "tae" meaning tea and "scailpreach" "a place of rocky clefts" in Irish. According to Robinson this name probably dates only from the last century, "when tea became such a comforter of the poor," and he disagrees with Father Dineen, who in his Irish dictionary, explains that the plant was used as a substitute for tea.

Unlikely, Robinson declares, rather it was doubtless the "appearance of its sere and shrivelled fronds in winter that probably made people think of the craved-for drug."

After exploring this intersection of names, nature, and human response, he explains why this "plant of the warm south" grows "on these bleak islands, whose other botanical stars [are] the limestone bugle, from northern and mountainous areas of Europe, and the spring gentian, best known from the alps." The answer lies in the origins of Aran's rock "as the layered sediments of a sea that changed in depth, turbidity, temperature and living contents," and the creation through erosion over millions of years of 'clints' and 'grykes' and the gradual evolution of the present's peculiar landscape, which "provides two contrasted environments for lime-loving plants. The differences between the 'microclimates' of the flagstone-like ground-surface and the grikes are as sharp as those between two climatic zones hundreds of miles apart." The "dissection of rock" through natural forces has ordered the lives of humans and plants alike, bringing plants close together which, on the continent, are estranged by distance and landscape — mountain to tundra. This unique environment favorable to the maidenhair consequently contributed "to the support of a scavenging fauna." Through an account of J.M. Synge's conversation with young island girls a century ago Robinson recounts how the Victorian passion for fern collecting led to "human children exploiting this particular ecological niche" by selling maidenhair ferns to "ladies and gintlemins" in the summer. In barely two pages, Robinson telescopes geology, etymology, botany, literature, sociology. One small Aran step opens outward, inward, and backward into meaning layered upon meaning.

Robinson may well be the non-fiction heir to the great international modernist writers: Eliot, Joyce, Pound, and Yeats (though his essays suggest his literary sympathies lie with Proust). Perspective is central to his work, as it was to theirs. Not only does he see with a naturalist's eye, he "sees" as the dissertations on the maidenhair and its labels show, how language affects the way we see. Viewing the surface of Aran, he simultaneously examines vast areas of time and space; he cuts across international and chronological boundaries with ease, and his work, ever aware of multiple traditions nevertheless defines a tradition of its own: it is *sui generis*. It breaks down the compartments reality is so often divided into: botany, geology, history, literature, psychology. It was said of Yeats, "Talent perceives differences; genius unity" — while Robinson seeks a wholeness in human experience, he insists upon the fundamental joy in differences. Nature's miracle is diversity. Just as he separated the maidenhair fern from the landscape, then isolated the various name-generated experiences of that fern, he shows again and again how important differences may be to a proper perspective. In his discussion of Aran's ubiquitous stone walls, "Sermons in Stone," he describes a variety of walls: the "substantial 'double wall,'" walls "of solid uncoursed masonry work," the *clai fidín* (fragment fence) constructed "to enclose a vegetable plot with some hope of excluding rabbits," and less solid walls: "On exposed terrain like Na Craga an open-work wall will dilute the gale more effectively than a solid one which would merely provoke the wind to hammer down upon the ground a few yards to its lee side." Robinson tells of a visiting preacher who mistook the functional *clai fidín* for shoddy workmanship and used these walls as metaphors "for slipshod construction on inadequate foundations." His misperception effectively toppled his sermon — "his rhetoric fell flat" — for his audience had high regard for such walls, knowing that they "demand care and patience in the building."

Poetically, but no less accurately, the walls are "the fossilized land-hunger of the 'Congested Districts,' of the Land War, of the Great Famine and above all of the

century of population growth that preceded it." Their journals show that scientists perceived the omnipresent walls as disheartening obstacles to field work, but Robinson explains this as "a blindness to the 'native' and his ways" and proceeds to explain how

> one should look for stones that run right through the wall and stick out on either side, and step up and over these as on a stile, refraining from leaning out from the wall or clutching at the topmost stones to lever oneself upright, but keeping one's centre of gravity as close to the wall and as low over its top as possible. Araners learn this as part of learning to walk. I have seen an Aran father stand back, watchful but not interfering, as a toddler heads up a six-foot wall. If that child does not leave the island he or she will grow up able to cross walls with such fluency one cannot see how it is done.

The preponderance of stone on Aran is a characteristic that, combined with its relatively small area, would seem to make it an ideal subject for intensive study; stone is, after all, relatively permanent, and traces of its use by humans should linger longer than other less durable materials. "Confabulating stone" is merely one of the book's many incisive, accurate, yet euphonious phrases, and out of the evidence of stone and "many fragmentary testimonies" he does "reconstitute" place after place. Aran's religious heritage is especially rich, in both stone and story, and Robinson resurrects holy Aran, one of the "four harbours between Heaven and Earth where souls are cleansed, the Paradise of Adam from which came the human race, Rome, Aran, Jerusalem," as Cormac mac Cuilennáin wrote of it in the middle ages. Walking through Aran's graveyards and contemplating its ruined churches and monasteries, Robinson brings not only a keen eye but also a deep curiosity that leads him from source to source, from book to book, from expert to expert, from manuscript to manuscript, from stone to stone in doggedly thorough research.

Among the ruins of St. Enda's monastery is a small rectangular building which survived the "Cromwellian depredations." Robinson notes that at least one end of the church dates from "a time when stone churches were so new an idea, at least in Aran, that their builders were still constrained by the forms of wooden structures, for the side walls are continued six inches or so beyond the gable wall to form a pillar running up either side of it like the corner-post of a wooden chapel." An extensive architectural and archaeological knowledge serve his keen eye and his mastery of the informing detail. "The walls of one or two little haggarts over the road from the castle ruins are draped in clambering hops which may have rambled on since the days when the Franciscan Brothers brewed their own beer," and these same hops, we learn, were used by villagers gathering seaweed for their potato patches, to protect their horses' backs from "the trickling sea water." "Cryptic syllables" on an early Christian slab "BENT, DIE, FAN, and SCAN" are explained as characteristic of "time-saving messages to eternity" which can be expanded to "Bendacht die for ainm Sanctan," "God's blessing on the soul of Sanctan." Where others look, Robinson can see. Weather-beaten cenotaphs are apparently illegible, "until the sun comes round to the west far enough to graze them with its rays," and suddenly they can be read. Patiently waiting for the light, finding the proper angle of vision; these could be metaphors for the Robinsonian method as he perceives past realities among present moments.

Stones speak, manuscripts speak, and place names add their voice as well: the delightful "Cosán na nAingeal, the path of the angels, where it is said that St Colm Cille used to stroll every day with celestial acquaintances" reaffirms an earlier era's

firm faith in a higher reality. Robinson is deservedly famous for transcribing and preserving thousands of Irish language place names in danger of extinction, and yet he was 37 before he began learning Irish. To say that this is one more evidence of his sympathy with a culture not his own is a less-than-accurate tribute, for a theme that runs through his work is that every culture is our own and deserves our sympathy. Living cultures are fragile enough, but those which come to us from the past often survive by merest chance. The story of St. Enda, one of Ireland's most revered saints, arrives in the present "through a single channel and might very easily have been irrecoverably lost." The means by which medieval Irish manuscripts disappeared and survived are a snarl of choice and chance, including for example, the "two-faced role of Bishop Ussher" (best remembered for calculating the date of creation as 4004 B.C., a peripheral contribution to the current battle in some American schools between fundamentalist Christians who have somehow come to embrace Ussher's quaint mathematics and those who would teach evolution), who embraced the law against Catholic clergy even as he secretly conspired with them to collect manuscript Lives of the Saints, simultaneously contributing to their destruction and their preservation. Robinson employs his fine mind and his detective skills to recover fragments of truth from the Lives of the Saints, exploring manuscripts, myths, folklore, and miracle tales. Some saints, he notes, such as Brigit, were appropriated from the Celts, and although "historical truth was not the prime concern of hagiographers . . . historians try to elicit truth from them. The old-fashioned way of doing this was to ignore all the obviously fabulous and miraculous stuff, and take the residue seriously." He observes wryly that those Protestant historians "who wrote on the saints fifty and a hundred years ago and took care to distance themselves from 'monkish credulity' and 'medieval superstition'" felt "no difficulties, one supposes with the equally surprising events from Cana and Galilee."

Robinson suggests the usefulness of Hubert Butler's thesis, that the stories of Saints are often "obscure picture(s)" of Europe's pre-historic politics, that the saints frequently represented ancient tribes. St. Fursey, for example, was probably "Forseti, the ancestor-god of the Frisians." Robinson's familiarity with Butler's fascinating study is but one more example of his wide-ranging and inclusive research. Indeed, after pages of exploration and consideration, Robinson the scientist does not dismiss the saints' tales as superstitious fantasy or remnants of pagan tribal history: "I am reluctant to reduce the miraculous history of St. Enda to such tepidity. As cosmologists now sense through their radio-telescopes a faint radiancy that has been batting about the universe for so long that it has cooled almost, but not quite, to absolute zero, so, when I pore over these strange pages . . . I feel some warmth of truth still emanating from them."

This metaphor points up some of the book's finest writing, as Robinson focuses on faint radiancy from the past to recover knowledge for the present. Piecing together the history of the Fitzpatrick family on Aran, he observes, "By what narrow paths between the gulfs of oblivion does even the basis of this speculation come down to us. . . . A life's story is completed at or by death, but then begins its career of disintegration. The intangibility of ghosts is our ignorance of the dead; to pray for a soul is to wish it a life whole enough to be recognized." And a few pages later, he writes of tales "picked up here and there — from a book of Connemara folklore, from an old, bedridden lady in Cill Rónáin, from the Aran postman met on the road — and strung together as dinner table amusement" but these tales even of "little local histories deserve better treatment." "On professional historians, ambassadors of the past to present times, devolves the solemn duty of representing

it in its entirety, but the humblest attaché in the Embassy of the Dead is also sent to lie abroad for his country and must do his best with scrappy briefings." Is there a lovelier, more insightful passage describing the historian — an attaché in the Embassy of the Dead? "Certain areas of Aran are so heavy with the presence of the past that to linger in them leaves one as enriched and as drained as can the contemplation of a work of art." One such place, faintly disquieting and even "spooky" prompts yet another fresh and illuminating perspective: "If there is a haunting here, it is not that some returned frequenter of these fields is peering into our time, but that I myself am trespassing back through gaps in the walls of the past."

Labyrinth's erudition dazzles as its ingenious perspectives illuminate, but the pages which deal with the islanders among whom the Robinsons lived and worked, and by whom they were accepted as neighbors, radiate with affection. English and atheist, the Robinsons arrived in Aran as consummate outsiders "with a full set of anticlerical prejudices," and yet soon found themselves not only friends with Cill Rónáin's priest, but co-conspirators in his renovation of the local chapel, and as allies of the priest, they were accepted into the religious life of the island. "An attractive feature of the Christian year in rural western parishes is the celebration of the Mass in private houses. In each village, the honour of hosting the annual Stations, as the ceremony is called, passes from household to household in rotation." When the Stations fell to an elderly bachelor, whose house was "neglected to the point of sorditity," he first resisted his duty then sought Máiréad's help. She was asked to serve as his *bean a' tí*, or housewife. The day before the ceremony, Robinson and the old man did the rough cleaning work, and as they finished, Máiréad showed up at the door "with a sentence that had caught her fancy from one of Séamus Ó Grianna's novels: *An bhfuil rud ar bith le déanamh annseo ar fearr fhoireas lámh mná dó ná lámh fir?* (Is there anything to be done here better suited to a woman's hand than a man's?") She then prepared the breakfast table and the altar. The next day the breakfast, the mass, confessions, and the tea and bread rolls afterwards all went well, and after the clergy had left, the old bachelor exclaimed, "If anyone had told Me! that an English Woman! Would be serving breakfast to the Priest! In my House!" Later that day the post man, having the story that Máiréad had served as *bean a' tí* confirmed, passed on the rumor that the Robinsons were "turning." "No we are not turning. But we are glad to feel that the Church's monopoly of ceremony does not exclude our participation. Indeed we assert by our presence on such occasions, that Catholicism, that Christianity in general, is a dialect of a universal language. This is Aran's view too. (One inquirer into our religious affiliation, when I told him we were atheists, looked troubled for a moment, and then said as if to comfort himself and us, 'Ah well, it's the same God really.')"

Open *Labyrinth* at random and be amazed, entertained, educated: from the observation that "tracking the passage of bad weather across the sound and away to the mainland is one of Aran's pleasures," Robinson's thoughts move to the rare occurrence of the perfect circle "in our natural experience," and then to the rainbow: "so accurately drawn, as if by cosmic compasses, that it impresses upon some temperaments a certainty of its spiritual significance, and on others the question of its material mechanism." He then explains the mechanism, the reflection of a ray of sunlight off the inside of a raindrop at an angle, "easily found by simple calculus to be about 42 degrees. . . . Thus the rainbow forms an arc at about 42 degrees to the continuation of a line from the sun through the eye of the observer. This arc, given the position of the sun and the eye, is fixed in the sky, a perpetually present geometrical abstraction, the Platonic idea of a rainbow, waiting only for the presence

of raindrops to bring it forth in all the colours of the visible." Robinson observes that "the mechanism of the apparition is clear; its meaning is open to our determination." This observation ripples outward into the "arcanum of high predictive signs: stormdogs, mare's tails, rings around the sun, cirrus-cloud brush-drawings of tomorrow's wind" compiled by islanders who must always have one eye on the weather. And this leads to a dejected but poetic commentary on the splintering of "delicate continuities" by the erection of electricity and telephone poles. "The mountain ranges are scratched, as if a vandal had scrawled on a painting with a nail. Even the sky is shoddy, defaced with graffiti. We must be blind, to let such things be done! Our blindness is that of grubs in the Apple of Knowledge."

Atheist though he may be, Robinson deftly uses religious metaphors to describe the natural world: grubs in the Apple of Knowledge. Apt. Poetic. Resonant. In *Pilgrimage*, observing that preachers often peddle moods of despair, focusing on the inevitable decline and destruction of all things, "the better to peddle their teleogical pick-me-ups," Robinson explains his own joyous approach to this life: "If one declines [their teleological pick-me-ups] the only cure is to walk on out of the state in which nothing matters into its mirror image, more vivid like all such, in which everything matters." It is into this mirror image that Robinson constantly leads his reader on this walk through the labyrinth of Aran: a vivid landscape (more vivid, perhaps, in being reflected by his imagination) in which everything matters.

While Robinson strains to be objective when he deals with Aran's theological conflicts, it is clear that his sympathies are usually with the Catholic community in its struggles with Protestants, primarily because the Protestants, historically, have been oppressors in the west of Ireland. He recounts the story of Dr. George Stoney who, it was rumored, was buried alive. Further, it was believed that the Protestant community allowed him to be buried alive because he was ready to "turn." Robinson's exploration of the clash between faiths on Aran and how historical processes made it possible to believe such an outlandish rumor is a masterpiece of clarity. It sheds a great deal of light, too, on the current situation in Northern Ireland, a conflict produced by the circumstances and processes under his scrutiny.

The complex of subjects dealt with in *Labyrinth* is considerable. Even a prolonged list can do little more than suggest the lush landscape of a book whose foundation, paradoxically, is near-barren rock: the effect of electricity on superstition (light has driven out the fairies), the occasional success of folk medicine (at the very least it had that sometimes curative ingredient: care, the human touch), the speed with which a healer moved from one part of the island to another, beating the messenger who, on horseback, had arrived to summon her, and thus gaining a reputation for the supernatural (she was "fluent" in crossing the walled fields), the American female whose quest was to seduce a man named George or the native equivalent on famous islands throughout the world (Aran's Seoirse frustrated her attempts to bed him), the life-world of the nautiloid preserved in Aran's stone (and its implications for the life-world of humans, based on the statistics of solar-system orbits), the history of Aran's prominent families (and their entanglement with Irish and European politics and history), the fascinating collection of folktales and place names (helping neighbors with labor, Robinson is paid in place names), the literary history of Aran (distressing incidents such as the battle of the saucepans and the horrible driving of cattle over Aran's cliffs during the Land Wars transformed by Liam O'Flaherty into art), amusing and informative looks at Robert Flaherty's famous documentary *Man of Aran* (its effects both humorous and serious upon the islanders), among unusual perspectives truly *singular* perspectives (Aran's landscape

as it might be seen through the eyes of a cow), postmodern delights (an imagined bad review of *Labyrinth*, which dismisses all that Robinson has written), a constant celebration of differences (the survival of the Irish language may depend upon "a positive welcoming among English speakers, of cultural diversity, an awakening to the sanity of differences"), Mandelbrot's theory of fractal geometry (applied to infinite coastlines and by extension to infinite reality), brilliant turns of phrase (an Araner hesitant to offend "Aristotelian ears" with his tales), Aran's strangest visitor (Antonin Artaud: "a wind from hell was blowing this man through Aran"), whimsical scholarship (James Joyce's article on Aran spawned *Finnegans Wake*), surprise guest appearances in Aran folktales (Aristotle losing a battle of wits with his wife, and his native dopplegänger, that tribute to cleverness, Haraí Steatail, or, in English, Harry Stattle), a list whose logical end would be found only after a complete unraveling of the book's fabric.

The book is about Aran certainly, but it also explores the human landscape in general. Through accretion, Robinson transforms Aran into a metaphoric Pangaea, but not the scientist's original land mass, rather an ideal all-earth, representing something of human beings in relation to the totality of their experience. Even reality, however, resists Robinson's attempt to transfix it. Returning to the location of a legend about a fox who escaped hounds and sent them plummeting to their deaths by swinging from a cliffside briar into its lair, he failed to find the spot. Then walking onward, he looked back and saw where "a great rim of the cliff . . . had fallen, and lay piled in gigantic rubble below. The fox's hole no longer exists, and a page has been torn out of my book. The Atlantic has bitten into the island's neck like a stoat, and will in time consume it all. Aran is a dying moment." A writer's task is often to preserve dying moments, as well as to try and resurrect dead moments, such as the "anvil talk" at the forge, where "everything is worked over and over again, every place, personality or event is traversed from every angle, everything is shown to be connected with everything else, every story contains all stories." *Stones of Aran* ever returns to the way humans perceive and attempt to arrest a constantly changing reality. Writing this book is, of course, one such glorious effort, and in the endeavor Robinson "hoped to learn . . . how to match one's step to the pitch and roll of this cracked stone boat of a cosmos." Whether he did or not, his delight in tilting different orders of truth, different realities, different means of capturing fluid reality, one against the other conveys to the fortunate reader his endless delight in this world.

In the end a reviewer shares some small portion of the frustration Robinson must have felt attempting to convey the proliferating implications of his Aran reality, his desire to impart it all offset by the finite form in which he must express himself. The book surpasses and diminishes anything that can be written about it, for it transcends commentary as surely as the reality of Aran, "perpetually stormbound in interpretation," transcends interpretation. Searching for adequate closure one can do little more than clumsily filch fragments of Robinson's own attempt adequately to end *Stones of Aran:* "The virtue of reality is that no understanding is equal to it; no walk, however labyrinthine, wears out the stone." And: "The ritual of attending to things one by one as we come to them enacts a necessity forced on us by our limitations, our lowly evolutionary stage of mind. In reality everything is co-present (or at least, and so as not once again to oversimplify, an uncountable number of stories struggle competitively through every event of space–time). The most comprehensive course we can chart through the incomprehensible is an evasive shortcut." But the shortcut Tim Robinson has chosen for us through Aran's Labyrinth is glori-

ous and memorable. The poet Seamus Heaney, whose gift of seeing is very like Robinson's, described his own calling with the words of Czelaw Milolz, words Robinson could articulate with undisputed accuracy: "I stare and stare. It seems I was called for this:/To glorify things just because they are."