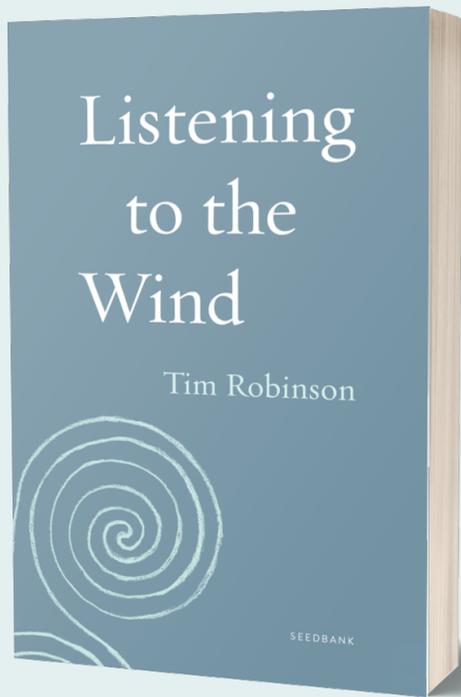


# LISTENING TO THE WIND

## BY TIM ROBINSON



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tim Robinson writes about the environment, history, and lore of Connemara which create the bigger picture of the island's culture. How much does nature and history play into developing a place's culture?
2. Tim Robinson and his wife moved to Connemara in 1984 where they immediately fell in love with the landscape and later published the Connemara Trilogy about their adopted homeplace. Have you ever been so moved by a place that you've felt immediately at home? What about the place made you feel that way?
3. Tim Robinson concerns himself with giving Connemara's residents a voice in *Listening to the Wind* when history has not. Why are some stories more interesting to media than others? Why is sharing perspective important in today's world?
4. Tim Robinson often writes long passages about the scientific nature of his environment. How does this affect your understanding of Connemara? Do you feel more connected to the land knowing the intricacies of its life?
5. *Listening to the Wind* illustrates Tim Robinson's fascination with the disappearance of the Irish language. How does language affect culture? Would Connemara be a different place if the language shifts completely?
6. Tim Robinson writes: "Nature can be pitch-forked out, but a seed always survives and blows back in again." What is the significance of this line considering the book as a whole? What do you think Robinson is trying to say?
7. The residents of Connemara have a deep relationship with the land. What impact does location have on you and your lifestyle? Does your lifestyle change based on where you are living?
8. We know from school that environment plays a big part in history but by reading *Listening to the Wind* we begin to understand that history also shapes environment. Where do you see this relationship in Connemara's story?
9. Tim Robinson is a very skilled technical writer and goes to great lengths to give every detail about Connemara in *Listening to the Wind*. How does this style of writing affect your understanding of the text? Do you prefer the descriptive passages or the retellings of lore and history?
10. As part of the Seedbank series, *Listening to the Wind* can be regarded as a guide for reflection on our relationship to the world around us. In what ways does this book challenge and broaden your perception of the world and humanity?

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### SYNOPSIS

From cartographer Tim Robinson comes *Listening to the Wind*, a breathtakingly intimate exploration of one beloved place's geography, ecology, and history. Robinson and his wife moved to Connemara, a small region on the west coast of Ireland in the north-western corner of County Galway in 1984 and immediately felt connected to the land, referring to it as their adopted homeplace.

*Listening to the Wind* is the first book of the Connemara trilogy depicted all the science, history, and culture that this place has to offer the world. We begin with the earth right in front of his boots, as Robinson unveils swaths of fiontarnach—fall leaf decay. We peer from the edge of the cliff where Robinson's house stands on rickety stilts. We closely examine an overgrown patch of heather, a flush of sphagnum moss.

Just as wild and essential as the countryside itself are its colorful characters, friends and legends and neighbors alike: a skeletal, story-filled sheep farmer; an engineer who builds bridges, both physical and metaphorical; a playboy prince and cricket champion; and an enterprising botanist who meets an unexpected demise. Within a landscape lie all other things, and Robinson rejoices in the universal magic of becoming one with such a place, joining with “[t]he sound of the past, the language we breathe, and our frontage onto the natural world.”

Regularly switching from detailed technical writing about Connemara's environment to epic stories of history and lore, *Listening to the Wind* is at once learned and intimate, elegiac and magnificent.

### ABOUT THE SEEDBANK SERIES

This new series of world literature expands Milkweed's publishing program to bring ancient, historical, and contemporary works from cultures from around the world to American readers. Just as repositories around the world gather seeds to ensure biodiversity in the future, Seedbank gathers works of literature from around the world that foster conversation and reflection on the human relationship to place and the natural world—exposing readers to new, endangered, and forgotten ways of seeing the world.