



The Mining Road

Leanne O'Sullivan

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The Mining Road, Leanne O'Sullivan's third poetry collection, finds inspiration in the disused copper mines that haunt the rugged terrain around Allihies, near her home at Beara, in West Cork. Like remnants of a lost world, the mines' ruined towers, shafts, man-engines and dressing floors, evoke an elemental landscape in which men and women laboured above as well as underground, and even mined in caverns below sea level. Mining promotes a sense of memory, and the riches embedded in the landscape are human as well as material. But things brought to the surface can have a startling ability to shine in the present, and O'Sullivan's poems move and provoke as they resonate with experiences at the heart of contemporary Ireland. 'O'Sullivan shifts away from the kind of "topographical" poetry of place that has become common in Irish writing, choosing instead to locate the place's meaning in "all of us listening". O'Sullivan repeatedly presents us with objects or places, which then act not as statements of arrival or recovery but as points of departure. Things we have seen before, often in other people's poems, come alive again in her hands The Mining Road is a strong and varied book of poems slow and concentrated pieces that register with great clarity the mystery of stories and images that exercise power over us, images and stories on which readers will dwell. At a time when historians, novelists and journalists are again revising our national narratives, these thoughtful, ambitious poems bring the past to life, but they also ask if any imagination of the past, no matter how rich and inevitable it feels, can ever be quite enough.' - John McAuliffe, The Irish Times.

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