



The Grampian Quartet (Canongate Classics)

Nan Shepherd

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Edited and introductions by Roderick Watson.

The Quarry Wood, although published well before *Sunset Song*, inhabits a similar world; the progress of its heroine could almost be the alternative story of a Chris Guthrie who did go to university. Compassionate and humorous, the grace and style of Shepherd's prose is heightened by a superb ear for the vigorous language of the north-east.

The Weatherhouse, Shepherd's masterpiece, is an even more substantial achievement which belongs to the great line of Scottish fiction dealing with the complex interactions of small communities, and especially the community of women – a touching and hilarious network of mothers, daughters, spinsters and widows. It is also a striking meditation on the nature of truth, the power of human longing and the mystery of being.

The third and final novel, *A Pass in the Grampians*, describes Jenny Kilgour's coming of age as she has to choose between the kindly harshness of her grandfather's life on a remote hill farm, and the vulgar and glorious energy of Bella Cassie, a local girl who left the community to pursue success as a singer, and has now returned to scandalise them all.

The Living Mountain is a lyrical testament in praise of the Cairngorms. It is a work deeply rooted in Shepherd's knowledge of the natural world, and a poetic and philosophical meditation on our longing for high and holy places.

This is the first omnibus edition of Shepherd's prose works – her sensitivity and powers of observation raise her work far above the status of regional literature and into the front rank of Scottish writing.

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