



A Season and a Time

Maurice Whelan

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A Season and a Time has poems that are snapshots and poems that read like short stories. They scan Ireland's green fields and Australia's ochre earth. Inspiration comes from a snowdrop, a telephone call, a broken musical instrument, a night spent in sub-zero temperatures in the Snowy Mountains. The subject matter ranges from activities that inspire, through the everyday, to behaviour that degrades.

Poetry, when it works well, provokes a creative reaction, enables the reader to make something that is their own. The image on the front cover tells a poetic story. Maurice Whelan's 'Anglo Irish', a poem in his last collection, Excalibur's Return, has these lines:

Lost words lost worlds
one and the same
languages like tall trees
drive roots
deep into the soil of the mind
the silent bell tolls for the silent voice.

In response to this poem, Lucy East, a Sydney artist, made the piece of art called Lost Words, shown on the front cover of this collection. She separated pairs of words, set them in resin and assembled them on an open, mirrored jewellery box.

The title of this collection and the title poem, 'A Season and a Time', were inspired by the book of Ecclesiastes - 'There is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.' 'Words', William Hazlitt said, 'are the only things that last forever.' Words, simply repeated, can become repetitious. New poems renew words.

'A word is dead when it is said, some say. I say, it just begins to live that day.' - Emily Dickinson

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