

OPENED GROUND

"ELOQUENTLY CONFIRMS HIS STATUS AS THE MOST SKILLFUL AND PROFOUND POET
WRITING IN ENGLISH TODAY."
—Edward Mendelson, *The New York Times Book Review*



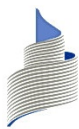
SELECTED POEMS 1966-1996

SEAMUS
HEANEY

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE



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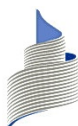
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Tun,

You are My

hero !!!

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ALSO BY SEAMUS HEANEY

POETRY

Death of a Naturalist

Door into the Dark

Wintering Out

North

Field Work

Poems 1965–1975

Sweeney Astray: A Version from the Irish

Station Island

The Haw Lantern

Selected Poems 1966–1987

Seeing Things

Sweeney's Flight (with photographs by Rachel Giese)

The Spirit Level

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Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968–1978

The Government of the Tongue

The Redress of Poetry

PLAYS

The Cure at Troy: A Version of Sophocles' Philoctetes



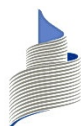
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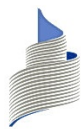
Selected Poems

1966–1996

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TUN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

Seamus Heaney

Opened Ground

Selected Poems

1966–1996



Farrar, Straus and Giroux

New York

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*Farrar, Straus and Giroux
18 West 18th Street, New York 10011*

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Printed in the United States of America

*Originally published in 1998 by Faber and Faber Limited, Great Britain,
as Poems: 1966-1996*

*Published in 1998 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux
First Farrar, Straus and Giroux paperback edition, 1999*

*The Library of Congress has cataloged the hardcover edition as follows:
Heaney, Seamus.*

*Opened ground : poems, 1966-1996 / Seamus Heaney. — 1st Farrar,
Straus and Giroux ed.*

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-374-23517-8

ISBN-10: 0-374-23517-1 (alk. paper)

1. Ireland—Poetry. I. Title

PR6058.E2065 1998

821'.914—dc21

98-4331

Paperback ISBN-13: 978-0-374-52678-8

Paperback ISBN-10: 0-374-52678-8

Designed by Cynthia Krupat

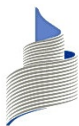
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for Marie



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Author's Note

This book contains a greater number of poems than would usually appear in a *Selected Poems*, fewer than would make up a *Collected*: it belongs somewhere between the two categories.

I have taken the opportunity to include a very few poems not printed in previous volumes and made a short sequence of extracts from *The Cure at Troy* (1990), my version of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. In similar fashion, 'Sweeney in Flight' is made up of sections from *Sweeney Astray* (1983), a translation of the medieval Irish work *Buile Suibhne*, which tells of the penitential life led by Sweeney after he was cursed and turned into a wild flying creature by St Ronan at the Battle of Moira.

Stations was published as a pamphlet by Ulsterman Publications in 1975. The first pieces were written in Berkeley in 1970.

'Station Island' is a sequence of dream encounters set on an island in County Donegal where, since medieval times, pilgrims have gone to perform the prescribed penitential exercises (or 'stations').

'Villanelle for an Anniversary' was written to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the founding of Harvard College in 1636. 'Alphabets' was the Phi Beta Kappa poem at Harvard in 1984.

I have included 'Crediting Poetry' as an Afterword. This seemed to make sense, since the ground covered in the lecture is ground originally opened by the poems which here precede it.

S.H.



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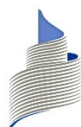
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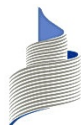
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"Perhaps the best descriptions of Seamus Heaney's extraordinarily rich and varied oeuvre come from the poet's own work. Mr. Heaney has created a remarkable series of poems that stay 'true to the impact of external reality' while at the same time remaining 'sensitive to the inner laws of the poet's being.'"

—MICHIKO KAKUTANI, *The New York Times*

Opened Ground includes the essential poems from Seamus Heaney's twelve previous volumes of poetry, as well as new sequences drawn from *The Cure at Troy* (Heaney's version of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*) and *Sweeney Astray* (an adaptation of the medieval Irish poem *Buile Suibhne*) and a number of previously uncollected poems. It closes with his Nobel Lecture, "Crediting Poetry," since, as he explains, "the ground covered in the lecture is ground originally opened by the poems which here precede it."

"Having just reread most of his poems, I find myself more, not less, interested, and convinced that I have only begun to plumb their bracing depths . . . The poems stay in the mind, which is the one essential feature of major poetry."

—JAY PARINI, *The Nation*

"Heaney's commitment to the independence of his art, to the pursuit of shape and richness and abundant ambiguity, is also a profound commitment to the quality of public life . . . In a dark time, Heaney . . . has turned borders and dividing lines into rich frontiers."

—FINTAN O'TOOLE, *The New York Review of Books*

SEAMUS HEANEY was born in 1939 in Northern Ireland. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995. A resident of Dublin since 1976, he teaches regularly at Harvard University.

COVER ART: *FIELD* (1985) BY SEAN SCULLY
COURTESY OF THE LOUISIANA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
HUMLEBAECK, DENMARK

FARRAR, STRAUS AND GIROUX
www.fsgbooks.com

\$19.00

Poetry

ISBN 978-0-374-52678-8



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