



# I Could Read The Sky

By Timothy O'Grady



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*I Could Read The Sky* tells of one man's journey from the West of Ireland to the fields and boxing-booths and building sites of England. Now, at the century's end, he finds himself alone, looking back, struggling to make sense of a life of unforgotten loveliness and loss. Exploring themes of love, dislocation and yearning, with stark, clear prose and stunning photographs, this novel explores the experience of Irish emigration as never before.

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## I Could Read The Sky By Timothy O'Grady Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This is a quietly ambitious, grave and earnest book that mixes the elegiac prose of Chicago-born novelist O'Grady (*Motherland*) with the haunting photographs of Englishman Pyke to establish, remarkably, a quintessentially Irish novel. It's a tale, in the form of a lament, about sadness, longing and resignation, the story of a west of Ireland man who leaves for England in search of work sometime in mid-century. O'Grady's text consists of impressionistic sketches of a hard but colorful youth left behind, of an entire family marked by poverty and transformed by the dire requirements of growing up poor. It's all recalled from a kind of old-folks home, as the narrator remembers the things he could do?"Thatch a roof. Build stairs. Make a basket from reeds.... Read the sky.... Remember poems"?and those he could not?"Eat a meal lacking potatoes. Trust banks. Wear a watch.... Win at cards. Acknowledge the Queen.... Kill a Sunday. Stop remembering." The keening of the narrator is peculiarly uplifting, distinguished by a teary-eyed lucidity. Pyke's photos support this mood like a fiddle might back an Irish air. Unrelated in subject matter to the text, the images nonetheless underscore displacement while extending the sense of loss into real bogs and real faces and incredibly gnarled "spalpeen" hands.

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From Kirkus Reviews

The Chicago-born O'Grady (*Motherland*, 1990) and Britisher Pyke collaborate to form an unusually expressive book of visual and written images, photos enhancing the mournful, lyrical story of a musical Irishman's migration to England in search of fieldwork and other hard labor--and finding the love of his life only to lose her. As he remembers the past, the narrator fixes images of an impoverished farm childhood in Labasheeda: music and the accordion become integral parts of his life, while siblings and neighbors leave home to seek fortunes abroad. His first love goes unrequited, and work as a hired farmhand on Irish soil hastens the day of his own departure, when Ma packs sandwiches, eggs, and a rosary, and Da won't say goodbye. In England, digging potatoes gives way to a transient life of factory work and road repair, with music in the pub of an evening. Da dies, then Ma, and the deep black laborer's hole the narrator is in seems about to claim him for eternity, until Maggie gives a glow to his life with her quick wit as he draws her in with his reels and laments. But when Maggie dies shortly after the two have married and returned to Ireland, all light is extinguished and only the familiar, anonymous toil the bereaved husband had known in Britain can offer comfort until time heals the wound. A tale of sorrow, finely told and delicately illustrated. --  
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### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**George Marsh:**

This I Could Read The Sky book is simply not ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is definitely information inside this publication incredible fresh, you will get info which is getting deeper an individual read a lot of information you will get. That I Could Read The Sky without we recognize teach the one who looking at it become critical in contemplating and analyzing. Don't be worry I Could Read The Sky can bring once you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' turn out to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even telephone. This I Could Read The Sky having great arrangement in word as well as layout, so you will not truly feel

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**Debra Weeks:**

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