



## The National Library of Ireland Border Literatures: Books and Questions for Discussion

*Border Literatures* is a reading and conversation series designed to share diverse literary perspectives on the experience of living in, crossing through, and reflecting on the century that has passed since the partition of the island of Ireland.

Beginning with an opening discussion, *Border Literatures; A Conversation* on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2021 and closing with a panel event *New Horizons* on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2022, *Border Literatures* is designed to build discussion of literature into the rich historical conversations that have framed the Decade of Centenaries.

The series will begin with a comparative conversation about borders in other places than Ireland, with a view to sharing multiple perspectives on borders in different cultural contexts. It will continue with readings of four authors, Eugene McCabe, Andrea Carter, Sue Divin, and Seamus Heaney, with discussion of literary fiction, noir, young adult literature, and poetry. Each reading will be hosted by a three writers and critics, who will lead discussion and take questions from the virtual audience. The series will close with a conversation with four contemporary writers on their work and the border.

Below you will find the information for our first reading discussion event on *Andrea Carter's Death at Whitewater Church* and the three discussion questions that our panellists will focus on during this event.

To register for all events click [here](#) and follow the instructions to register for your chosen event.

### **Reading 1 - Death at Whitewater Church by Andrea Carter**

**20<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 Online Zoom Webinar Event at 7pm click [here](#) to register.**

When a skeleton is discovered, wrapped in a blanket, in the hidden crypt of a deconsecrated church, everyone is convinced the bones must be those of Conor Devitt, a local man who went missing on his wedding day six years previously. But the post mortem reveals otherwise.

Solicitor Benedicta 'Ben' O'Keeffe is acting for the owners of the church, and although an unwelcome face from her past makes her reluctant to get involved initially, when Conor's brother dies in strange

circumstances shortly after coming to see her, she finds herself drawn in to the mystery. Whose is the skeleton in the crypt and how did it get there? Is Conor Devitt still alive, and if so is there a link? What happened on the morning of his wedding to make him disappear?

Negotiating between the official investigation, headed up by the handsome but surly Sergeant Tom Molloy, and obstructive locals with secrets of their own, Ben unravels layers of personal and political history to get to the truth of what happened six years before.

This book is available through public library services in Ireland or can be purchased at your local independent bookshop.

**The questions we will be considering in our discussions of this book are:**

Q1 The border is simultaneously absent *and* intensely present in *Death at Whitewater Church*. How does Andrea Carter negotiate the intricacies and practicalities of border life in her book?

Q2 How does the Northern landscape and the communities that inhabit it, shape the story of *Death at Whitewater Church*?

Q3 How does the character of Benedicta O’Keeffe guide the reader to the borders of society?

**Bonus question** – How does noir connect literature across borders, in Ireland, Scotland and beyond?

This event will be chaired by Liam McIlvanney and the panel will consist of Elizabeth Mannion and Neil Hegarty.

Throughout our discussions during the Border Literatures programme we will be gathering titles for a suggested reading list on the topic of fiction that centres on the idea of borders. If you would like to suggest a title for this reading list on border literatures please email us at [learning@nli.ie](mailto:learning@nli.ie)

If you would like to receive the complete reading list after the culmination of our events, please sign up for our mailing list by clicking [here](#).

If you or your book club is taking part in reading along or attending our online events you can let us know by tagging us on social media using #BorderLiteratures on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

