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The Short Stories of John MacGahern

Foreword

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Foreword

Linda Collinge-Germain et Emmanuel Vernadakis

- 1 John McGahern, to whom the present issue of the *Journal of the Short Story in English* is devoted, has been a part of the *Journal's* history since the first publication of a critical article on the story "Christmas" in the Autumn 1985 issue. In March 2000 the author himself, accompanied by his wife Madeline, was guest of honor at the Research Center's Conference on the Irish and Irish-American Short Story held at Belmont University in Nashville and organized by John Paine and Corinne Dale, American editors of the *Journal*. The Angers Research group all travelled to Nashville for the Conference together with Liliane Louvel from the University of Poitiers, a specialist of John McGahern's short stories and a personal friend of the writer. John McGahern attended all the presentations given during the conference with the exception of the five papers concerning his own stories for, as he put it, he never felt comfortable when his works were praised. All members of the research group were impressed by his kindness and generosity, by his easy manner and his genuine friendliness, including his quite unexpected and unprecedented invitation of all members of the group to a Nashville restaurant at the conclusion of the conference.
- 2 After this first encounter, John McGahern and his wife Madeline accepted the *Journal's* invitation to be guests of honor at the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the *JSSE* in May 2003. During this visit he recorded "Korea" and passages from "Parachutes." These recordings, along with the interview conducted during that same visit, appear in the Special 20th anniversary issue of the *Journal* (*JSSE* n° 41, Autumn 2003), dedicated to John McGahern. Meals together at Ben Forkner's, Linda Collinge's and at a traditional Loire Valley "guinguette" were additional occasions to strengthen ties between the McGaherns and the members of the Angers Research team. His passage among us was memorable.
- 3 The remarkable voice recorded that spring continued to reverberate during the Short Story Conference held in Cork in 2008. The participants in the Round Table discussion chaired by Charles May were led consistently to comment upon McGahern's work and eventually unanimously agreed that John McGahern had given a particular resonating Irish voice to the modern Irish short story.

- 4 We were very pleased to entrust Claude Maisonnat, professor of English Literature at the University of Lyon II, with the guest editorship of this Special McGahern Short Story Issue. As a specialist of the short story and having published several articles on John McGahern, he was eminently qualified to undertake this task. We thank him for so willingly devoting his time to this project and offer you the fruits of his labor.
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