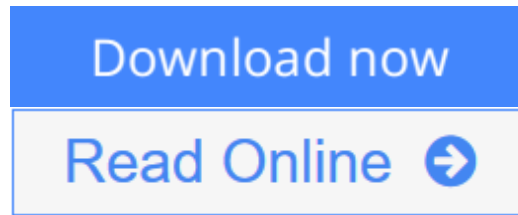


TransAtlantic: A Novel

By Colum McCann



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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • LONGLISTED FOR THE MAN BOOKER PRIZE • NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY KIRKUS REVIEWS

In the National Book Award–winning *Let the Great World Spin*, Colum McCann thrilled readers with a marvelous high-wire act of fiction that *The New York Times Book Review* called “an emotional tour de force.” Now McCann demonstrates once again why he is one of the most acclaimed and essential authors of his generation with a soaring novel that spans continents, leaps centuries, and unites a cast of deftly rendered characters, both real and imagined.

Newfoundland, 1919. Two aviators—Jack Alcock and Arthur Brown—set course for Ireland as they attempt the first nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean, placing their trust in a modified bomber to heal the wounds of the Great War.

Dublin, 1845 and '46. On an international lecture tour in support of his subversive autobiography, Frederick Douglass finds the Irish people sympathetic to the abolitionist cause—despite the fact that, as famine ravages the countryside, the poor suffer from hardships that are astonishing even to an American slave.

New York, 1998. Leaving behind a young wife and newborn child, Senator George Mitchell departs for Belfast, where it has fallen to him, the son of an Irish-American father and a Lebanese mother, to shepherd Northern Ireland’s notoriously bitter and volatile peace talks to an uncertain conclusion.

These three iconic crossings are connected by a series of remarkable women whose personal stories are caught up in the swells of history. Beginning with Irish housemaid Lily Duggan, who crosses paths with Frederick Douglass, the novel follows her daughter and granddaughter, Emily and Lottie, and culminates in the present-day story of Hannah Carson, in whom all the hopes and failures of previous generations live on. From the loughs of Ireland to the flatlands of Missouri and the windswept coast of Newfoundland, their journeys mirror the progress and shape of history. They each learn that even the most unassuming moments of grace have a way of rippling through time, space, and memory.

The most mature work yet from an incomparable storyteller, *TransAtlantic* is a

profound meditation on identity and history in a wide world that grows somehow smaller and more wondrous with each passing year.

Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more.

“A dazzlingly talented author’s latest high-wire act . . . Reminiscent of the finest work of Michael Ondaatje and Michael Cunningham, *TransAtlantic* is Colum McCann’s most penetrating novel yet.”—*O: The Oprah Magazine*

“One of the greatest pleasures of *TransAtlantic* is how provisional it makes history feel, how intimate, and intensely real. . . . Here is the uncanny thing McCann finds again and again about the miraculous: that it is inseparable from the everyday.”—*The Boston Globe*

“Ingenious . . . The intricate connections [McCann] has crafted between the stories of his women and our men [seem] written in air, in water, and—given that his subject is the confluence of Irish and American history—in blood.”—*Esquire*

“Another sweeping, beautifully constructed tapestry of life . . . Reading McCann is a rare joy.”—*The Seattle Times*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

An Amazon Best Book of the Month, June 2013: McCann's stunning sixth novel is a brilliant tribute to his loamy, lyrical and complicated Irish homeland, and an ode to the ties that, across time and space, bind Ireland and America. The book begins with three transatlantic crossings, each a novella within a novel: Frederick Douglas's 1845 visit to Ireland; the 1919 flight of British aviators Alcock and Brown; and former US senator George Mitchell's 1998 attempt to mediate peace in Northern Ireland. McCann then loops back to 1863 to launch the saga of the women we've briefly met throughout Book One, beginning with Irish housemaid Lily Duggan, whose bold escape from her troubled homeland cracks open the world for her daughter and granddaughter. The language is lush, urgent, chiseled and precise; sometimes languid, sometimes kinetic. At times, it reads like poetry, or a dream. Choppy sentences. Two-word declaratives. Arranged into stunning, jagged tableaux. Bleak, yet hopeful. (Describing Lily's first view of America: "New York appeared like a cough of blood.") The finale is a melancholy set piece that ties it all together--an unopened letter, "passed from daughter to daughter, and through a succession of lives," becomes the book's mysterious token, an emblem of a world grown smaller. McCann reminds us that life is hard, and it is a wonder, and there is hope. --*Neal Thompson*

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review In 1919, British aviators Alcock and Brown made the first nonstop transatlantic flight, from Newfoundland to Ireland. McCann, in his first novel since the National Book Award-winning *Let the Great World Spin* (2009), imagines a letter handed to Brown by a young photographer, written by her mother, Emily, a local reporter covering the flight, to be delivered upon their landing to a family in Cork. Years earlier, while on a speaking tour in Ireland with the mission to raise money for the abolitionist movement, Frederick Douglass forms a bond with young Isabel, the daughter of his host family in Cork. Lily, a young servant, emboldened by Douglass' visit, sets out for America, in the hope of a better life. About a century and a half later, former Senate majority leader George Mitchell is coaxed out of retirement to broker talks between the various factions, with the intention of getting a peace agreement by Good Friday. At the tennis club, he meets a woman in her nineties who, years earlier, had lost her grandson to the Troubles. It is Lily and her offspring's stories—set across different times and in many different places—that ultimately tie everything together, as McCann creates complex, vivid characters (historical and otherwise) while expertly mixing fact and fancy to create this emotionally involving and eminently memorable novel. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Prepub buzz about McCann's latest suggests it will be among the summer's leading literary fiction titles. --Ben Segedin

Review

"A dazzlingly talented author's latest high-wire act . . . Reminiscent of the finest work of Michael Ondaatje and Michael Cunningham, *TransAtlantic* is Colum McCann's most penetrating novel yet."—*O: The Oprah Magazine*

"What distinguishes *TransAtlantic* from [Colum] McCann's earlier work isn't the stunning language or the psychological acuity or the humor and imagination on display—all of that has been there before. It's the sheer ambition, the audacity to imagine within the same novel the experience of Frederick Douglass in 1845 . . . then the first nonstop trans-Atlantic flight in 1919 . . . then to leap into the near-present and embody the former senator George Mitchell, . . . knitting through and around them the stories of four generations of women."—*The New York Times Magazine*

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From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Peter Clark:

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Catherine Gabel:

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Theresa Collins:

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