



Easter Rising: An Irish American Coming Up from Under

Michael Patrick MacDonald

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A powerfully redemptive story of escape from the Irish American ghetto.

Michael Patrick MacDonald's *All Souls: A Family Story from Southie* told the story of the loss of four of his siblings to the violence, poverty, and gangsterism of Boston's Irish American ghetto. The question "How did you get out?" has haunted MacDonald ever since. In response he has written this new book, a searingly honest story of reinvention that begins with young MacDonald's breakaway from the soul-crushing walls of Southie's Old Colony housing project and ends with two healing journeys to Ireland that are unlike anything in Irish American literature.

The story begins with MacDonald's first urgent forays outside Southie, into Boston and eventually to New York's East Village, where he becomes part of the club scene swirling around Johnny Rotten, Mission of Burma, the Clash, and other groups. MacDonald's one-of-a-kind 1980s social history gives us a powerful glimpse of what punk music is for him: a lifesaving form of subversion and self-education. But family tragedies draw him home again, where trauma and guilt lead to an emotional collapse. In a harrowing yet hilarious scene of self-discovery, MacDonald meets his father for the first time -- much too late. After this spectacularly failed attempt to connect, MacDonald travels to Ireland, first as an alienated young man who has learned to hate shamrocks with a passion, and then on a second trip with his extraordinary "Ma," a roots journey laced with both rebellion and profound redemption.

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