

Midwinter Break
(2017)

By

Bernard MacLaverty

Irish Cultural Center Book Discussions

Saturday, March 28, 2020
10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

McClelland Library
Norton Room

Note to new participants: Reading this guide is optional. All you really need to do is read the novel and attend to participate in our discussion. We always hope you will bring a friend with you.

Discussion Guide:

- ▶ **The title clearly suggests a time of year, but does it have thematic significance as well?**
- ▶ **This novel dwells on a particular marriage. In the opening pages (the night before the midwinter break) what do we learn about the wife and the husband as individuals and what do we learn about their marriage?**
- ▶ **Does the shift of location (from Glasgow to Amsterdam) affect their relationship?**
- ▶ **Think about how their experiences in Belfast have affected their lives.**
- ▶ **Consider the ending of the novel: Is it satisfying within the context of the whole narrative? Why did MacLaverty decide to locate the scene in an airport? Are you disappointed? Will this marriage endure?**
- ▶ **MacLaverty is praised for his prose style. What features would you point to in support of such praise? You might want to note scenes or passages to share with the group. That suggestion also holds for aspects you find less praiseworthy.**
- ▶ **What will you remember about this novel? Do you plan to look for other novels and short stories by MacLaverty?**

Other Works by MacLaverty:

***Secrets & Other Stories* (1977)**

***Lamb* (1980)**

***A Time to Dance & Other Stories* (1982)**

***Cal* (1983)**

***The Great Profundo & Other Stories* (1987)**

***Walking the Dog & Other Stories* (1994)**

***Grace Notes* (1997)—shortlisted for Booker Prize**

***The Anatomy School* (2001)**

***Matters of Life & Death & Other Stories* (2006)**

***Collected Stories* (2013)**

Looking Ahead: *Normal People*, by Sally Rooney, is the focus for our discussion on April 25. Since this is the last discussion for the season, we invite you to bring suggestions for our readings beginning in September.