

## **The Silent People (1962)**

By

Walter Macken

(1915- 1967)

Walter Macken was an Irish actor, dramatist, and novelist born in Galway. His best known work is the historical trilogy: **Seek The Fair Land** (set in Cromwellian Ireland, **The Silent People** (in the time of the famine), and **The Scorching Wind** (set at the time of the Irish War of Independence).

An Irish Times review of a recent study of Macken noted: "... (Macken) addresses issues of gender, class, race, nation, religion, age, etc...always focusing on the experiences of the little man and woman."

The work we are discussing is the second book in the trilogy.

Some things to think about as you read **The Silent People**:

- How does the title resonate with the events of the book?
- When is silence effective and when does it indicate something imposed upon the people?
- The political issues of the day are reflected in the effects they have on the common people. Why isn't Daniel O'Connor a major character when his ideas are relevant to the fictional characters?
- Of the major ways conflict is portrayed, what role does the divide between English and Irish or between Protestant and Catholic play?
- Are the class divisions also important?
- The issue between armed resistance and political action is an important issue between Dúalta and Cuan. This difference is often framed as being between violence and words and we see this throughout the novel. How do you feel it is resolved? Or is it?

Next month we will look at a play by G.B. Shaw

**Major Barbara**

Saturday, April 28