

<p>Shadows on Our Skin (1977)</p> <p>By Jennifer Johnston (1930-2025)</p>	<p>Irish Cultural Center Book Discussion March 28 10:30 AM - 12:30PM</p> <p>McClelland Library Norton Room</p>
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Jennifer Johnston is one of the best-known and respected Irish writers in the world. As the daughter of an actress (Shelah Richards) and playwright (Denis Johnston), she has lived in the public eye all her life. She attended Trinity College, where she earned a degree in ancient and modern literature. Other books include **The Gates** (1973), **How Many Miles to Babylon** (1974), **The Old Jest** (1979), **The Railway Station Man** (1984), **The Invisible Worm** (1991), and **The Illusionist** (1995). Our selection this month was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1977.

Discussion ideas for your consideration:

- Any reflections on the significance of the title?
- Is there any significance to the fact that the author lives in N. Ireland?
- Think about how you would describe the following characters: Joe Logan, Kathleen, Brendan, Logan's father and mother.
- How does the threat of war manifest itself in the novel?
- Anthony Burgess: "The whole of sad Ireland seems compressed into a thin sheaf, with sharpness, humour, and not one scruple of sentimentality." How accurate is this assessment?
- Joe Logan is a poet. How does this aspect influence the structure of the novel?
- Did you like this novel by Jennifer Johnston? Would you consider reading other works by her?
- What improvements would you suggest to Johnston? How about aspects worthy of praise?
- Irish President Michael D. Higgins paid the following tribute: ". . . throughout her many novels and plays, provided a deep and meaningful examination of the nature and limitations of identity, family and personal connections throughout the tumultuous events of 20th century Irish life." Does this provide any insights into this novel?