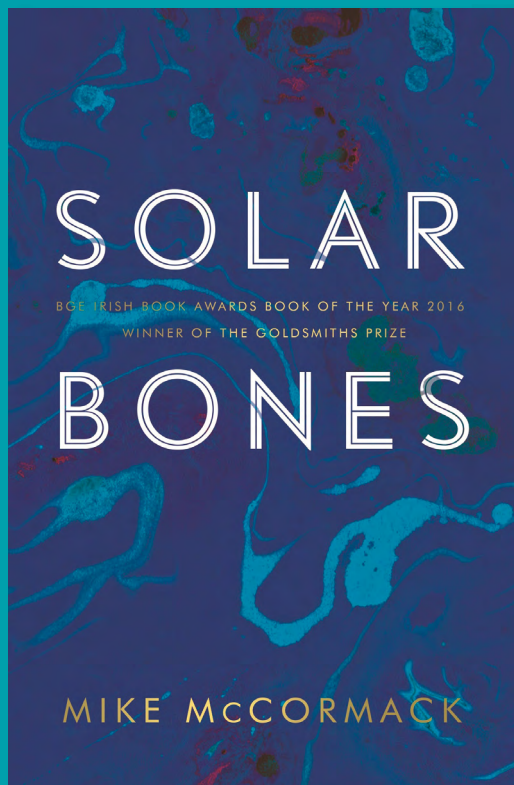




Reader's Guide



Other novels by Mike McCormack
Getting It In the Head (1996)
Crowe's Requiem (1998)
Notes from a Coma (2005)
Forensic Songs (2015)

Solar Bones Mike McCormack

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About the author

Mike McCormack is an award-winning novelist and short story writer from County Mayo, Ireland. His previous work includes *Getting it in the Head*, *Notes from a Coma*, which was shortlisted for BGE Irish Novel of the Year, and *Forensic Songs*. In 1996 he was awarded the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature for *Getting it in the Head* and in 2007 he was awarded a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship. In 2016, *Solar Bones* won the Goldsmiths Prize and the BGE Irish Book of the Year award. He was born in 1965.

About the book

Marcus Conway has come a long way to stand in the kitchen of his home and remember the rhythms and routines of his life. Considering with his engineer's mind how things – bridges, banking systems, marriages – are constructed – and how they may come apart.

Mike McCormack captures with tenderness and feeling, in continuous, flowing prose, a whole life, suspended in a single hour.

What the judges thought

A stream-of-consciousness novel that succeeds on its own terms, the judges deemed *Solar Bones* to be 'innovative without being quaint'. It is, they said, full of 'beautifully sustained writing', and explores ideas about politics, family and infidelity with 'great sensitivity'.

Discussion points

This novel is narrated in a single sentence – how did this innovative writing style affect your reading experience? Did it make it difficult to put the book down?

What were your impressions of Marcus? Did you like him? Did you understand him?

Marcus thought of entering the priesthood when he was young, but later becomes an engineer – how do these two vocations contrast and complement each other?

The novel's style has been called 'distinctively Irish' – did this come through for you? Do you think comparisons to Joyce and Beckett are accurate or useful?

Have you read other works by McCormack? Does *Solar Bones* feel closer in style to his novels or his short story collections?

Useful links

www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/2016/07/bedad-he-revives-why-solar-bones-resurrection-irish-modernism

www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/solar-bones-by-mike-mccormack-review-portrait-of-a-universe-in-dereliction-1.2637871

www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jun/24/mike-mccormack-soundtrack-novel-death-metal-novel-solar-bones