

## AG31: Agallamh le Rody Gorman: A' sgrìobhadh Bàrdachd

Interview Rody Gorman: Writing Poetry

Presenter: Derek MacAoidh (Derek Mackay)



### DEREK:

Tha mi an seo an-dràsta le Rody Gorman, bàrd à Èirinn, ach a bhios a' sgrìobhadh cuideachd anns a' Ghàidhlig. Rody, ciamar a thòisich thu an toiseach air bàrdachd a sgrìobhadh?

### RODY:

Nuair a bha mi anns an sgoil, a' bhliadhna mu dheireadh ma dh'fhaodte anns an sgoil, thachair gun do chuir mi ... gun do ghabh mi ùidh ann am bàrdachd Yeats, is tha mi fhathast a' canail, na bliadhnaichean fada às dèidh siud, gur e siud a chuir gu sgrìobhadh mi fhìn. Saoilidh mi gura h-e. Ged a bha beàrn ann a bha cianail fhèin fada eadar a bhith a' meòrachadh air a bhith a' sgrìobhadh agus a bhith a' sgrìobhadh ann am firinn - bha 's dòcha fichead bliadhna ann ma dh'fhaodte - gus an robh mi aig ìre far an robh mi a' sgrìobhadh rudan às am faighinn tlachd mi fhìn agus gun a bhith ga thilgeil air falbh. 'S dòcha gur e ceum caran cudromach ann an ionnsachadh na h-obrach a tha siud, nam fhèin, gum bi thu mothachail air dè as fhiach a chumail is dè nach fhiach.

### DEREK:

Agus às dèidh bhliadhnaichean a-nise, carson a tha thu fhathast ri sgrìobhadh?

### RODY:

Seach gur e fasan a th' ann. Tha mi air fàs cho cleachdte ris 's a tha mi ri bhith a' gabhail fois, fiu 's ... 'S e ... 'S e dòigh obrach a th' ann dhomh fhìn. 'Se rud a th' ann às ... às ... 'S e dòigh às am faigh mi fhìn taic gus gnothaichean a thuigsinn is gnothaichean fhaicinn. Sin an dòigh às am faigh mi fhìn seòrsa de lèirsinn air mo bheatha 's na tha timcheall orm, le bhith a' sgrìobhadh.

### DEREK:

I am here now with Rody Gorman, a poet from Ireland, who also writes in Scottish Gaelic. Rody, how did you come to start writing poetry?

### RODY:

When I was in school, perhaps my final year in school, I happened to get ... to take an interest in the poetry of Yeats, and I still say, many years later, that it's what inspired me to write. I think it was. Even though there was a very long gap between thinking about writing and actually writing - that was something like twenty years - before I reached the stage where I was writing material that I was happy with and that I didn't throw away. Perhaps that's a fairly important step in learning the work, within myself, realising what is worth keeping and what is not.

### DEREK:

And after many years now, why do you still write?

### RODY:

Because it's a habit. I am as used to doing so as I am to relaxing, even ... It's ... It's a way of working for me. It's something that ... that ... It's a way of helping myself to understand things and to see things. That's the way in which I can get a sort of perspective on my life and my surroundings, through writing.

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### **RODY:**

Gu math tric, cha tig às ach sgudal, ach bidh thu a' mothachadh gur h-e sgudal a th' ann, agus gu h-ainneamh is gu h-ainneamh, thig rud as fhiach às, is saoilidh mi gum bi thu mothachail air siud cuideachd. Bidh mi aig amannan a' smaoinichadh, "Carson nach feuch thu rudeigin eile, seach bàrdachd? " Fiu 's ... 'S e bàrdachd an aon dòigh sgrìobhaidh a th' agamsa, is ged a tha mi air na mìltean de dh'fhaclan a sgrìobhadh, 's ann as a' bhàrdachd a tha an ìre mhath a h-uile gin dhiubh siud.

'S dòcha gur e freagairt na ceiste a bhios mi a' cur orm fhèin gu bheil an aois orm co-dhiù agus bha mi air mo ghlacadh agus tha mi air a bhith an sàs ann cho fada sin 's nach urrainn dhomh mi fhìn a tharraing às chun na h-ìre 's gu bheil e na fhasan stèidhte agamsa a-nise a bhith a' sgrìobhadh gu cunbhalach. Ma tha buannachd sam bith às a siud, saoilidh mi gur h-e gum bi thu a' fàs nas mothachaile 's nas mothachaile air dè as fhiach ... dè as fhiach ... Mar as aosta a dh'fhàsas tu - uill, mise co-dhiù - bidh mi nas fhaiceallaiche a thaobh na tha mi a' leughadh. Bidh mi a' canail rium fhìn, "Chan eil cus tìde air fhàgail agamsa ann a sheo," so, leis a sin, 's e a tha bhuam a bhith a' leughadh na tha a dhìth orm agus na tha mi dha-rìribh airson a bhith a' leughadh, agus tha mi car an aon dòigh a thaobh a bhith a' sgrìobhadh a-nise, seach mar a bha bho chionn fiu 's fichead bliadhna air ais, nuair a sgrìobhainn càil sam bith. Chan eil mi an dùil gu bheil mi a-nise a' sgrìobhadh càil sam bith dìreach air a shon fhèin, is gu bheil mi nas fhaiceallaiche a thaobh na tha mi a' leigeil am follais, mar gum bitheadh.

### **DEREK:**

A bheil e furasta a dhèanamh no a bheil e doirbh?

### **RODY:**

Often, all that comes out is dross, but you will be aware that it is dross, and occasionally, very occasionally, you will produce something worthwhile, and I think you'll be aware of that too. At times, I think, "Why don't you try something else, besides poetry? " Even ... Poetry is the only form of writing I do, and although I have written thousands of words, just about all of those are in the poetry.

Perhaps the answer to the question I ask myself is that I am getting old and I became caught up in it and have been doing this for so long now that I am unable to extricate myself to such a degree that it's now an established practice for me to write constantly. If there is any benefit from that, I think it's that you become more and more aware of what is worthwhile ... what is worthwhile ... The older you become - well, myself anyway - I become more careful about what I read. I say to myself, "I don't have much time left here," so what I have to do is read what I need to and what I really want to read, and I'm kind of the same way when it comes to writing now, as opposed to how I was even twenty years ago, when I would write absolutely anything. I don't believe that I write anything purely for itself and that I am more careful about what I allow to be seen, as it were.

### **DEREK:**

Is it easy to do, or is it difficult?

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### **RODY:**

Bha còir aige a bhith doirbh, doirbh. Aig amannan, feumaidh mi aideachadh gu bheil mi fhìn ga fhaighinn caran soirbh. 'S dòcha, mar a thuirt mi, seach gur e fasan a th' ann dhomh fhìn - tha e air a bhith na fhasan o chionn fada - gu bheil mi cho cleachdte ris an dòigh chruthachaidh, mas e siud a th' ann, an dòigh smaoinichaidh, às an tig, air a' cheann thall, bàrdachd air choreigin. 'S dòcha gur e siud a bhios a' toirt orm a bhith a' smaoinichadh aig amannan gu bheil e soirbh, ach 's e droch nòs a tha siud dhomh fhìn, saoilidh mi. Càil sam bith as fhiach do sgrìobhadh, bha còir aige a bhith doirbh, bha còir aige a bhith na dhùbhlàn dhut. 'S dòcha nach eil mi a' cur uimhir a dhùbhlàn orm fhìn 's a bha còir agam, 68 no 's dòcha gu bheil mi air fàs cho cleachdte 's cho eòlach air an obair fhèin gu bheil e ann an seadh ... gu bheil mi a' smaoinichadh gu bheil e nas fhasa. 'S dòcha nach eil e nas fhasa, ach 's dòcha gu bheil e dìreach nas cunbhalaiche.

### **DEREK:**

Dè an rud as fheàrr a sgrìobh thu riamh, no an rud as motha a thug tlachd dhut?

### **RODY:**

'S dòcha gur e a' chiad rud a chaidh fhoillseachadh. Bidh cuimhne agad air a siud gu siorraidh bràth, agus tha cuimhn' 'am a' chiad dàn a sgrìobh mise, a' chiad dàn ann an Gàidhlig a sgrìobh mise. 'S ann o chionn fichead bliadhna a bha e agus nochd e anns an iris, 'New Writing Scotland', agus bha mi air mo dhòigh fad na mìosan fada leis an aon dàn bheag a bha siud. Nist, tha mi air na ceudan dhiubh a sgrìobhadh bhon uair sin is chan eil mi an dùil gu bheil gin dhiubh air uimhir a thlachd a thoirt dhomh agus a thug am fear sin.

### **RODY:**

It should have been difficult, difficult. At times, I must admit that I do find it rather easy. Perhaps, as I said, because it is a habit for me - it has been a habit for a long time - that I am so used to the creative process, if that's what it is, the way of thinking that, in the end, will result in poetry of some description, Perhaps that's what makes me think at times that it is easy, but I think that is a bad habit for me to get into. Anything that's worth writing, it should have been difficult, it should have been a challenge for you. Perhaps I don't set myself as great a challenge as I should, or perhaps I am so used to, and so familiar with the process itself that it is in a way ... that I think it is easier. Perhaps it isn't any easier, but perhaps it's just more constant.

### **DEREK:**

What was the best thing you ever wrote, or the piece which gave you the most pleasure?

### **RODY:**

Perhaps the first work that was published. You will remember that for evermore, and I remember the first poem I wrote the first poem that I wrote in Gaelic. It was twenty years ago and it appeared in the periodical 'New Writing Scotland', and I was elated for months because of that one little poem. Now, I have written hundreds of those since then, and I don't suppose that any of them have given me as much pleasure as that one did.

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### **RODY:**

Ach tha mi air a bhith ag obair a-nist o chionn faisg air bliadhna a-nist air sreath gu math fada de bhàrdachd anns an dà Ghàidhlig agus as a' Bheurla, agus tha measgachadh, agus tha iad a' dol an lùib a' chèile fad na tìde, agus tha stuth - seann stuth air an do chuir mi riochd an latha an-diugh, mar gum bitheadh - agus tha stuth a chruthaich mi às ùr agus stuth a thionndaidh mi gu Gàidhlig an latha an-diugh is Gaeilge an latha an-diugh a rèir an t-suidheachaidh agus tha sin stèidhte air sgeulachd Shuibhne, Buile Shuibhne, a dh'fheuch iomadach bàrd nas fheàrr na mi fhìn, Seumas Heaney nam measg - 's dòcha gu bheil dùbhlann ann a shiud - agus tha sin air toileachas a thoirt dhomh nach eil mi a' faireachdainn le càil sam bith a sgrìobh mi o chionn ùine fhada. Agus thèid ... Nochdaidh e sa chlà an ath-bhliadhna. So, chì sinn dè an seòrsa ... ciamar a thèid gabhail ris. Ach tha mi toilichte leis a siud an-dràsta, agus chan ann tric a chanainn siud mun obair agam, ach mar aon chnap còmhla, tha ... tha mi caran toilichte leis a seo.

### **DEREK:**

Dè an t-àite as annasaiche dhan deach thu le bhith a' sgrìobhadh, no an rud as annasaiche a thachair dhut ri linn?

### **RODY:**

But I have been working for close to a year now on quite a long series of poems in both Gaelic languages and in English, and there's a blend, and they constantly interweave with each other, and there's some material - ancient material that I've updated to a modern style, as it were - and there is material that I have composed and material I have translated into modern Scottish Gaelic and modern Irish Gaelic depending on the situation and that is based on the story of Suibhne, 'Buile Shuibhne' ('The Frenzy of Suibhne'), which has been tackled by better poets than me, including Seamus Heaney - perhaps that's the challenge - and that has given me a satisfaction that I haven't felt as a result of anything I've written in a long time. And it will be ... It will appear in print next year. So, we'll see what sort of ... how it is received. But I'm pleased with it now, and I don't often say that about my work, but as a complete set, I'm ... I'm quite pleased with this.

### **DEREK:**

What's the most unusual place you've visited due to your writing, or the strangest thing that's happened to you as a result of it?

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### **RODY:**

Tha cuimhn' 'am, bha mi turas ... Bha mi a' leughadh ann an toll san talamh. Agus às dèidh siud ann an craobh ann an àite air a bheil Druskininkai ann an Lituàinia, agus nas fhaisg air an taigh, bha mi aon turas a' leughadh san tùr ann am Port-adhair Inbhir Nis. Ann an iomadach dòigh, bheir a' bhàrdachd gu àiteachan neònach thu, ach ... agus àiteachan tlachdmhor fhèin cuideachd. Tha thu a' cruthachadh ceanglaichean le bhith a' sgrìobhadh. Tha thu a' dol an lùib feadhainn eile a tha ris an aon obair - car an aon obair riut fhèin - is tha thu a' faicinn mar a tha iadsan ga làimhseachadh seach mar a tha thu fhèin. Is tha sin na thogail inntinn an-còmhnaidh. Ach cuideachd gu bheil thu a' dol an lùib dhaoine eile a tha ri ealain air choireigin aig nach eil an aon càirdeas ri sgrìobhadh fhèin, agus 's e fosgladh sùil a tha sin cuideachd. Chan eil fhios 'am a bheil sin annasach, ach 's e rud cianail fhèin feumail is inntinneach a th' ann.

### **DEREK:**

Rody, tapadh leat gu dearbha.

### **RODY:**

Do bheatha, a dhuine. Tapadh leat fhèin.

### **RODY:**

I remember one time I was ... I did a reading from a hole in the ground. And after that from a tree in a place called Druskininkai in Lithuania, and closer to home, I once did a reading in the tower at Inverness Airport. In many ways, poetry takes you to unusual places, but ... and very pleasant places too. You form bonds through writing. You go among other people who are involved in the same work - work similar to your own - and you see the different ways in which they handle it as opposed to how you would. And that is always inspiring. But also you are mixing with other people who are involved in various kinds of art who don't have the same relationship with writing, and that is an eye-opener. I don't know if that's unusual, but it's certainly very useful and very interesting.

### **DEREK:**

Rody, thank you very much.

### **RODY:**

You're welcome, man. Thank you too.