It’s 1939 and young Maeve O’Sullivan and her family are among the last inhabitants of a windswept Island off the south coast of Ireland. After her father drowns in a boating accident, Maeve finds herself the last inheritor of the old ways of healing. But the future beckons to Maeve with the arrival of Seamus, a handsome young medical student heading for Dublin. Maeve suddenly finds herself at a crossroads, torn between the pull of the past and the lure of the modern. Must she sacrifice one in order to accommodate the other?

St Brigid, patroness of poetry, craft and midwifery, hovers over this richly evocative story about the tension between progress and tradition. Timely and timeless, Kearney’s novel offers sensual homage to a singular landscape brimming with a Gaelic wisdom about the natural world.

“I salute – nay admire – Richard Kearney’s energy and vision.”
— Seamus Heaney

“[Richard Kearney’s work] lights bonfires in the mind.”
— Anthony Burgess
The London Observer

“A gifted storyteller of ideas.”
— Michael Cronin
The Irish Times

Richard Kearney is an Irish philosopher and writer who holds the Seelig Chair of Philosophy at Boston College. He has written many books on European philosophy, narrative imagination, and Irish culture, as well as a book of poetry and two previous novels, Sam’s Fall and Walking at Sea Level. Kearney is also director of the international Guestbook Project of Narrative Hospitality.