CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN
IRISH POETRY, 1966–2010

In Continuity and Change in Irish Poetry, 1966–2010, Eric Falci reshapes the story of Irish poetry since the 1960s. He shows how polemical arguments concerning the role of poetry in 1960s Ireland evolve into a set of formal and compositional strategies for emerging Irish poets in the mid-1970s and beyond. His study presents a cohesive picture of the relationship between Northern Irish poetry and poetry from the Republic of Ireland since World War II and traces the lineage of lyric practice from a unique historical perspective. At the same time, it recontextualizes late-twentieth-century Irish poetry within the long Irish poetic tradition, places Irish writing more accurately within the field of postwar Anglophone poetry, and offers a new account of lyric’s critical capacities. Of interest to Irish studies scholars and also twentieth-century poetry specialists, this book provides a much-needed guide to some of the most inventive and notable poetry written in the past forty years.

Eric Falci is Assistant Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley, where he teaches courses on contemporary Irish literature, modern British literature, and modern poetry. He has published essays on the poetry of Paula Meehan, the concept of place in contemporary British and Irish poetry, the publishing practices of contemporary Irish and Scottish-Gaelic poets, and the work of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill.
CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN IRISH POETRY, 1966–2010

ERIC FALCI

University of California, Berkeley
## Contents

**Acknowledgments**  
page vii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acknowledgments</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Refashioning Irish poetry, 1966–1974</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Triangular Muldoon</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 McGuckian's histories</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Carson's city</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ni Dhomhnaill along the spine</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion: “Recent Irish Poetry”</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**  
205

**Index**  
229
Acknowledgments

This project began under the supervision of Professor Catherine McKenna, and I am deeply indebted to her for her brilliance and guidance. She is a remarkable teacher and scholar, and I feel privileged to be her student and friend. I would also like to thank Wayne Koestenbaum and Joan Richardson for helping with this book’s early stages. I have been extremely fortunate to be part of a wonderfully generous and invigorating department at Berkeley, and I would like to thank my colleagues and students for their intellectual energy and verve. In particular, Charles Altieri, John Bishop, Mitch Breitwieser, Ian Duncan, Catherine Gallagher, C. S. Giscombe, Steve Goldsmith, Kevis Goodman, Robert Hass, Lyn Hejinian, Abdul JanMohamed, Steven Justice, Maura Nolan, Geoffrey G. O’Brien, Samuel Otter, Gautam Premnath, Kent Puckett, Michael Rubenstein, Scott Saul, and Sue Schweik helped this book (and me) along with their keen readings and their invaluable advice. Each has made this book better. I would like to single out Joseph Falaky Nagy and Tomás Ó Cathasaigh for their detailed and amazingly helpful comments on my work. John Kerrigan’s remarks on the manuscript were crucial, and I am awed by his generosity and encouragement. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Ray Ryan at Cambridge University Press, and I cannot say how much I appreciate his support throughout and the effort he made to see this project through. I owe each of them quite a debt. C. D. Blanton has been a remarkable colleague, interlocutor, and friend. It will take me a very long while to repay the time and thought he has put into these pages. I also am grateful to Kathleen Donegan, Nadia Ellis, David Landreth, Steven Lee, Namwali Serpell, and Emily Thornbury for such thrilling camaraderie and conversation. I would like to thank Jesse Cordes Selbin, who helped immensely with the final stages of this project. I would also like to thank Louis Gulino at Cambridge University Press and Aishwarya Dakshinamoorthy at Newgen for seeing this book through the production process, as well as Wendy Jo Dymond for her thorough
Acknowledgments

copyediting. For their friendship through the years, I would like to thank Mike Cronin, Denell Downum, Jaime Espinoza, Erika Osterhout, Zohall Rouhani, Jesse Sarinana, Moynagh Sullivan, Frederick Tibbetts, Linda Wardlaw, and Rebecca Wisor. I would especially like to thank my parents, Thomas and Gail Falci; my brother, David Falci; and James Monto, as well as Lydia and Charles Whitehead, Anna Whitehead, Catriona Whitehead, and Molly and Jordan Love, for their unwavering love and support. Lastly, and mostly, I would like to thank Amanda Whitehead – my dearest friend and my deepest love.

The research and writing of this book were generously funded by The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, in particular the Helaine Newstead Dissertation Fellowship in the Humanities; a Visiting Fellowship from Harvard University; a Humanities Research Fellowship from the University of California, Berkeley; and two Junior Faculty Research Grants from The Committee on Research at the University of California, Berkeley.

Thank you to the following publishers for permission to reproduce copyright material from the poems listed:

- New Island Books for Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s “Fuadach”/“Abduction” and “Fáilte Bhéal na Sionna don Iasc”/“The Shannon Estuary Welcoming the Fish” (from *Rogha Dánta/Selected Poems*, 2000).
Acknowledgments

- Shearsman Books for excerpts from Catherine Walsh’s *City West*. Copyright © Catherine Walsh, 2005.
- And the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University for permission to quote from the Medbh McGuckian and Ciaran Carson papers.