

CLEARING THE TANGLED WOOD

JAMES LAWLESS

An acclaimed meditation on poetry affording an alternative way of seeing the world. The process of creativity is discussed. The influences of other disciplines on the heightening of consciousness are described as well as methodologies of observation that have been employed in the last 100 years are elucidated. Attention is paid to the specific contribution of modern Irish poetry especially in the role of the poet in society. Works of three non-English poets (Salinas, Lorca and Pasternak) are appraised in some detail and the role of these three poets in their societies discussed with a view to the vindication of poetic insight and illumination against societal forces that would destroy the poet and his poetry. The final section of the work deals with poetry as an art form uniquely able to interpret a fragmented and arid, post-modern world.

‘A thrilling sequence of revelations, a beautifully written work of love, pleasure and insight.’—Brendan Kennelly, poet.

‘A linguistic ballet, learned and lively, on behalf of poetry.’—John Montague, poet.

‘This book has given me back my belief in poetry as not only a useful discipline but an essential manner of being in the world.’—Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, poet.

‘In this luminous and wide-ranging meditation, James Lawless considers the dynamics of creation. For him the poet is one who, in reconnecting us with our buried selves, also invents a new way of seeing the world.’—Declan Kiberd, Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature, University College Dublin.

‘A wonderfully compelling and elegantly written book.’—Michael D Higgins, poet and President of Ireland.

‘A sophisticated and engaging study of why poetry matters to us now... from Pasternak to Patrick Kavanagh, Lawless opens a treasure chest of metaphor and anecdote, illustrating the liberating effect of the poet’s “interpretive act”’. —Katie Donovan, poet and Irish Times reviewer.

‘*Clearing the Tangled Wood* is as much a masterwork of poetic imagination as of scholarly precision.’

—Ronald M. Mazur, Professor of European Languages and Linguistics, Winona State University.

A masterwork of poetic imagination.
Ronald M Mazur

CLEARING THE TANGLED WOOD

*Poetry as a Way of
Seeing the World*

JAMES LAWLESS