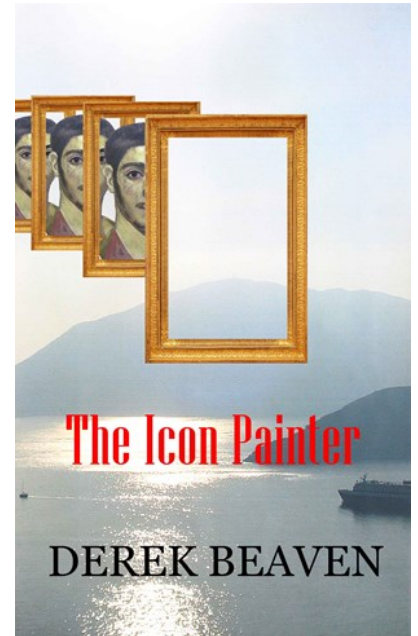


DEREK BEAVEN: BOOKS, LIFE AT A GLANCE, WRITING...

(www.derekbeaven.com)

About *The Icon Painter*

What is the truth of the 'left hand paintings' produced by the artist, Owen Davy? Why—now that he has moved to a Greek island in order to paint—is his own self-portrait proving so problematic? And what, if cultural and linguistic barriers can be overcome, is to be learned from the local painter of Greek Orthodox icons whom he meets by chance? Owen, writing emails to his gallery owner and friend, Theo, starts to address these questions, looking back on his youth—particularly to an affair with a married woman, Julia, and his subsequent tragicomic exile on the streets of Paris—and to his childhood, with its dark iconography. What emerges is of profound spiritual and artistic consequence, as, with new arrivals on the island and new friendships forged, the novel becomes a remarkable exploration of love. *The Icon Painter* offers a fierce critique of numerous cultural orthodoxies, whilst probing the very roots of art, memory and relationship in strange and moving ways.



Kindle edition available on Amazon at:

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Icon-Painter-Derek-Beaven-ebook/dp/B00K9PQ86G/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1402161174&sr=1-1&keywords=the+icon+painter

Previous Novels by Derek Beaven—Samples from Press Reviews

Newton's Niece

'Magnificent set pieces, a richness of thought, a prodigal and original talent make this a novel worth reading from a writer worth watching.' *Time Out*

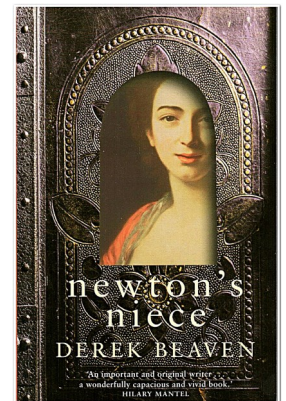
'An exuberant debut, ambitious and questing.' *Observer*

'One is in no doubt that one is in the hands of a truly remarkable and gifted writer ... This endlessly fascinating and inventive novel is funny and profound by turns.' *Hampstead & Highgate Express*

'An important and original writer ... A wonderfully capacious and vivid book.' Hilary Mantel

'An intelligent, moving and highly readable novel of ideas ... something of a triumph in a novelistic genre that is often said to be congenitally unsuited to the British literary tradition.' Alain de Botton

'A bold flourish of a debut, taking names from the footnotes as well as the pages of history and making them live and breathe.' *The Times*



Acts of Mutiny

'An extraordinary novel.' *Sunday Times*

'In its method, slowly pulling the whole into focus, Beaven is reminiscent of William Faulkner ... But the strength of his novel, its confident eloquence and menace are distinctive and unforgettable.'

David Horspool *Daily Telegraph*

'Arresting ... [Beaven] displays an impressive and wholly distinctive grip on both language and form.'

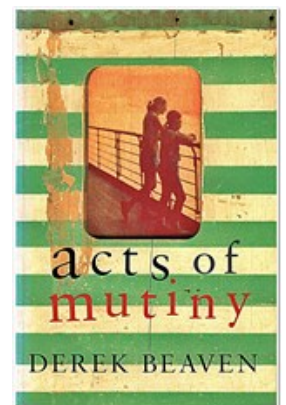
Eve Claxton *Time Out* (New York)

'Ambitious, relentlessly ominous ... Mark Rozzo *Los Angeles Times*

'You'll be lulled by Beaven's descriptive talent and transported by the novel's more conventional pleasures—sympathetic characters and an exciting, geopolitical plot.'

Mark Schone *New York Times Book Review*

'The psychological accuracy with which Beaven describes character, and the truthfulness of his observation of childhood, is matched by the enjoyable precision with which he evokes time and place ... a beautifully written book.' Christina Koning *The Times*



If the Invader Comes

'Large, deft, prickly and ambitious. His work practically explodes with narrative assurance.'

Julie Myerson *Guardian*

'A remarkable feat of the imagination.' *Literary Review*

'Vic and Clarice are not asking for much, simply to be together. Yet with the intensifying horror around them, plus the burden of their own secrets and deceptions, that simple ambition tests them both in this powerful, sharply conceived novel.'

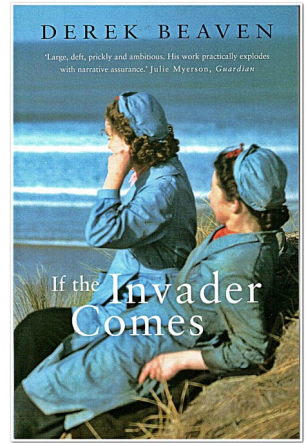
Dominic Bradbury *The Times*

A grand love story, tenderly written, that does justice to the huge subject of war by showing us the often terrible, sometimes magnificent effects it has on small lives.'

Alison Rowatt, *Herald*

'Beaven has a gift for creating insistently human individuals who prove to be illuminating under pressure ... a fine engagement with the largest and smallest details of what it is to be English.'

Lavinia Greenlaw *Times Literary Supplement*



His Coldest Winter

'With wonderful imaginative intensity, expressed in an original style of elliptical impressionism galvanised by sudden realistic shocks, Derek Beaven uses an austere background to dramatize a story of the rivalry of young love, the rivalry of ton-up motorcycle gangs, and the rivalry of international industrial espionage of military urgency ... An ingenious, multi-layered novel.' *Sunday Telegraph*

'An oblique, suggestive, estranging book that knits together sex, treachery, Cold War politics and hard science.' *Literary Review*

'Gripping' *Sunday Express*

'A wonderful book ... very moving' Rosie Boycott on BBC Radio 4

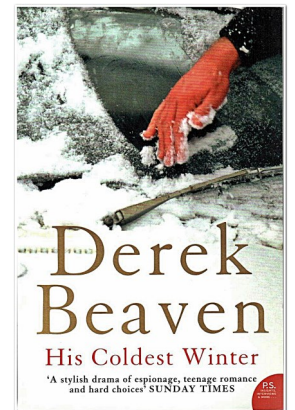
'A master of evoking atmosphere ... Beaven writes about physical surroundings and physical sensations with absolute clarity and a poetically oblique manner.'

Sunday Business Post

'One of our most uncompromisingly individual novelists' *Guardian*

'This is a fine novel that achieves an extraordinary exactitude of feeling matched by a perfect sense of place.' Jane Housham *Guardian* (on the paperback edition)

'A cold weather, Cold War thriller' *Telegraph*



About the Author

LIFE AT A GLANCE

BORN

South London 1947

EDUCATED

Attended eight schools in England and in Australia—including Ashlyns, an experimental comprehensive in Hertfordshire—and read English at St Peter's College, Oxford University.

CAREER

After university, taught English at a grammar school and then trained as a dancer at the Laban Centre, London. Worked briefly with a small opera company. Returned to teaching at a college, tutoring English and Drama. Now writes full time.

LIVES

Berkshire, England. Married. Two grown up children.



BOOKS

Newton's Niece (1994)
Acts of Mutiny (1998)
If the Invader Comes (2001)
His Coldest Winter (2005)
The Icon Painter (2014)

AWARDS

A Commonwealth Writer's Prize for *Newton's Niece*, which was also shortlisted for the Writers' Guild 'Best Fiction Book'.
Acts of Mutiny shortlisted for both the Guardian Fiction Prize and the Encore Award.
If the Invader Comes longlisted for the Booker Prize.

WRITING IN PRACTICE

My books take a long time to write. I like to work over the material a great deal, getting both hands into the keyboard (like Owen in *The Icon Painter*) and feeling the substance of the language develop and mould as though it were a variety of clay.

I began to write when I was a teenager. I'd ended up at a mixed comprehensive state school in Hertfordshire, UK, and an inspirational teacher there, who's still a good friend, ran a play-reading group for sixth formers. Every month we would meet in someone's house and spend the evening reading one of the fascinating modern plays being produced at that time. A year or so of this, and I knew what I wanted to do with my life.

I concentrated for a number of years on poetry and plays. It wasn't until the invention of the affordable mass market Word Processor that I began to feel more comfortable with the novel-writing process. My first machine was a little Amstrad 'PCW' with no hard drive; it was all I could afford at the time. The text was green on black, and there was only one font. The little printer was so slow that my first novel took a week to print out.

Nevertheless, the device made it possible to work in the way I needed, and it revolutionised my life. Fifteen years and several computers later I had four very well-received novels under my belt. But the times were changing. I realised that before my next project I'd have to make a choice: to write the 'next book' I could already feel growing inside me, or to write something much more market friendly. I chose to follow my intuition, well aware of the financial risks it ran.

Even allowing for my very slow-going writing regime, *The Icon Painter* surprised me, demanding a prodigious eight years. It wasn't for want of application: the work was 'full on', only excepting the time I then had to take out for my part time job. Quite why the book claimed so many hours, I don't know. I kept apologising to my agent; but, in the end, I just had to resign myself to the fact that each novel has its own rhythm.

During those eight years, however, the publishing landscape changed even further. At the centre of it all came the financial crash, and one consequence was that the trade's appetite for so-called 'literary' fiction, already severely diminished, withered to near zero. Yet the interesting thing about *The Icon Painter's* long gestation was that electronic publishing became available—quite unexpectedly—in the meantime. That rewrote all the rules. And it gave me the chance to publish the book I wanted to. Now I very much like the sense of control the new environment provides for the writer, and I look forward to publishing more material—both novels and poetry—very soon.