Twitter Thread by Canongate



Canongate
@canongatebooks

I’m going to tell you a story. And hold tight, because this is an emotional one.

In 2013, Canongate republished three novels that had fallen out of print: William McIlvanney’s Glasgow-set Laidlaw trilogy, first published between 1977 and 1991.

It’s hard to overstate the influence these books had had on crime writing, but he was responsible for many of the tropes we now take for granted in that genre. @Beathhigh, @valmcdermid, @cbrookmyre, @MarkBillingham, @DameDeniseMina and others all cite him as a major inspiration.

In fact, @Beathhigh tells a lovely story about coming to one of Willie’s events in the 80s, and telling him he planned to write detective fiction like Laidlaw, but set in Edinburgh. He still has his book, inscribed “Good luck with the Edinburgh Laidlaw” and signed by Willie.

McIlvanney wasn’t just revered for his writing; he was also known for his humour, his graciousness, and his charm. I was lucky enough to work with him, and attest to the fact he was a proper old-school gentleman. I mean, just look at this photo. How could you not love him?



His novels are infused with a love of the city and language of Glasgow, the characters all multilayered and complex. Even his descriptions of weather are glorious: ‘A Glasgow sun was out, duly luminous, an eye with cataract’.

Willie passed away 5 years ago today. Having believed for years he’d been forgotten, in that period of two years after republication he was left in absolutely no doubt how revered he was by the crime writing community, and the writing world at large. It moved him hugely.

And, it turns out, it also inspired him. Because, when he passed away, he had started writing a new Laidlaw book for the first time in decades: the story of Laidlaw’s first ever case. Sadly it was left unfinished...but we knew exactly who McIlvanney would have entrusted it to.

So today, we are delighted, excited and not a little emotional to announce the upcoming 2021 publication of The Dark Remains, co-authored by William McIlvanney and Ian Rankin. https://t.co/7qZhj39DRx

WILLIAM MCILVANNEY

IAN RANKIN

THE DARK REMAINS



LAIDLAW'S FIRST CASE

This is a dream pairing and, as Willie’s partner Siobhan comments in the Guardian piece, it’s what Willie would have wanted. We think Ian has done him proud.