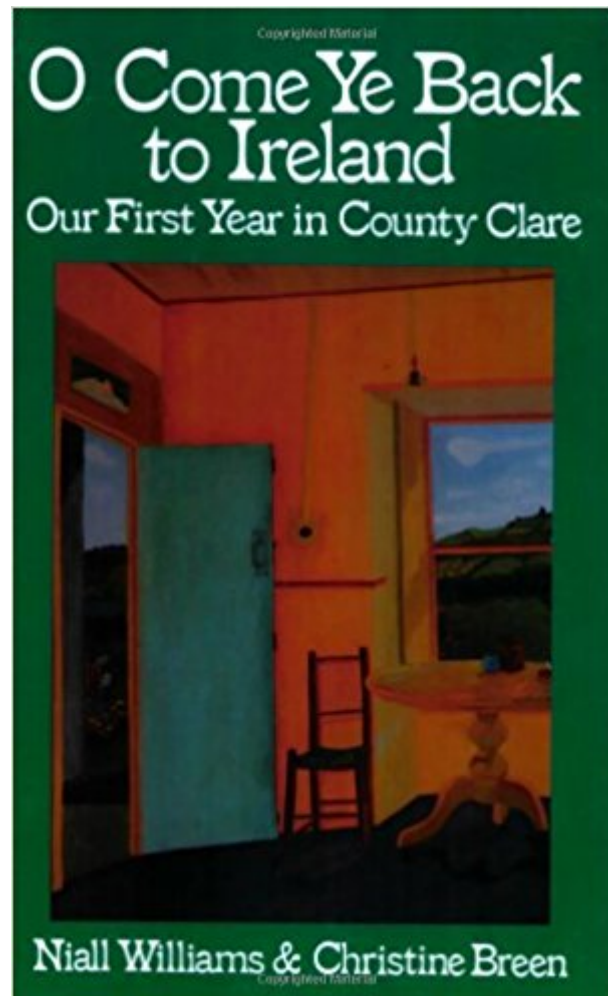




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# O Come Ye Back To Ireland: Our First Year In County Clare



## Synopsis

Niall and Christine left their careers in New York City for a simpler, more authentic life in a cottage outside the tiny village of Kilmihil in County Clare. "Their tale is a delightful romance." —The New York Times Book Review

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A New York City couple, who gave up their urban existence to settle in the tiny village of Kilmihil on Ireland's west coast, here recount their adaption. "Entertaining and instructive," said PW, the work "captures a way of life foreign to most readers." Illustrated. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.

In 1985, Williams and Breen left their New York City publishing jobs and moved to remote County Clare in western Ireland. Breen had planned to paint and Williams to write, but when their food, shelter, and even energy source depended on their own efforts and the weather, which in the west of Ireland means rain, the two found it necessary to alter their plans in order to survive. The reader will find out about the impact of rain on the region, the interdependence of neighbors, and, most of all, what it is like to live in what society considers "poverty." While the authors continued to have doubts about their decision, their charming account often reads like a novel and is recommended for most collections. Boyd Childress, Auburn Univ. Lib., Ala. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Someone told me about this book several years ago, and I meant to read it. But, forgot about it. This cropped up as a recommended read, and I thought, "Oh, yes, I meant to read this!" SO glad I did. Beautifully written, this story of 2 "city slickers" moving to the middle of nowhere in Ireland could have just been farce, and laughter at the expense of others. But, it's not. It's a tribute to the hard working folks who helped them adjust (and survive!) to an almost alien way of life. With good humor, and the kind of great anecdotes folks tell about the ones they love, this book leads you to a time lost to us. Yes, it was only in the 80's, but with the digital age, no one is truly as isolated as they were. This Ireland is almost gone. And, to be able to sit back, and live in it for a while (thru these wonderful authors) is a great privilege and joy.

Christine and Niall, who is Irish born, are two young 1980's New York professionals that are off to Ireland for a years adventure. The book is created by sharing and melding the contents of each person's diary of first year thoughts about their adventure. They leave the creature comforts of Manhattan for a rural cottage in remote County Clare, Republic of Ireland. The cottage belonged to Christine's grandfather. The cottages walls do no challenge the wind as it mostly filters through as it wishes. The cottage interior and exterior require a good bit of work to brave the Irish elements of persistent rain and the ever present wind. The cottage garden presents another opportunity to learn about the Irish weather. Christine And Niall expend great efforts to learn about local customs, neighbors, and what is required to fit in and survive in a new "world" and very different environment. Upon arrival the local phone exchange still has a operator; a phone installation takes months; a bed delivery, once it arrives in Ireland, is a few months away; satellite/cable T.V. Is non existent; grocery stores, the Chemist (drug store), hospital, doctor, etc., are miles away. The couple share with us the creation and development of a new Irish life from how to grow potatoes and vegetables, cutting "turf" for a year long fire, raising chickens, and cattle (three cows and calves). Niall attends and graduates from a two month "farmers" course. They explain and detail the human side of Irish life from funerals to the ethos of neighbor helping neighbor. Christine sells a few paintings, they revive the local drama society and receive a few awards. All of the above is written about in a concise and descriptive style that keeps the story moving in an informative and interesting journey that makes you want to cheer for their hard work and success. Well done!

Two New Yorkers with ties to Ireland return there to live, learn to farm, live (almost) off the grid, and pursue a creative life. A struggle to adapt to the place, learn survival techniques, make connections in the community, rehab the farm. But entertaining and inspiring! Captures a certain time in Ireland's

long history when some began Americans began to return to their roots in the land. Great for the armchair traveler (and homesteader).

Good book for learning about rural Ireland thirty years ago. It was enjoyable in the majority...the parts written by Niall, the husband, were very good, while the wife, Chris, just wrote lists for the most part, which don't make for exciting narrative. I wondered at how many times each of them called themselves "lonely" while sitting next to, walking next to, and riding next to the other. Overall, their attitudes were just a bit annoying at times. But, Niall is a very good storyteller!

Since I am Irish, I dream of how it would be to live there. This book was a fun peek into how it would have been years ago. The trials that this couple went through and the rewards were an adventure. They were accepted by the Irish people they met and became a good part of the community. Lots of ups and downs and lots of hard work, but they ended up getting what they set their hearts on.

My wife and I both enjoyed this account of the challenges and rewards of making a big move as a young married couple to pursue their dreams. Engaging reading. The account of their life in Ireland provides background for better understanding Niall's novels *As it is in Heaven* and *History of the Rain* - also great reads!

I enjoyed the book immensely. Keep it in mind, it was written 30 years ago and much has changed. Niall (and Chris) both write very well and it was a pleasure to be taken along for the ride. I have dreamed of moving back to my ancestral homeland, Ireland, and it gave me a glimpse of what it might be like.

This is a very funny, true story told by a husband and wife who move to the far west of Ireland. Things don't always go smoothly for them, but they make the best of it. This is especially good for anyone interested in Irish culture or who is thinking of learning to farm.

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