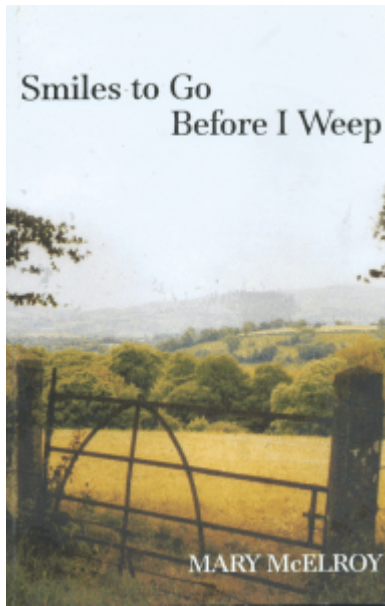


Smiles to Go Before I Weep



The sun always rises after a storm writes Rodney Edwards of the *Impartial Reporter* on the back cover of this anthology. *Nobody knows this better than Mary McElroy. This brilliant book is a testament to that.*

Yet, as the title suggests, the truth that Mary knows is more complex. Wishing for the sun will not make the storm go away sooner, and the thunder may come again long after the sky has cleared.

But he is right in this: no one understands grief better than Mary, and here she describes and dissects all its stages with sympathy and humour. She has experienced the pain and the absurdity, and writes honestly about both.

Her poems are often funny, like Victoria Wood at her best, and filled with surreal images of the everyday:

Worms don't have a care in the world
Tunnelling their way, all-powerful, through soil.
They never look back and live life to the full.

Just make sure
you don't marry one.

Mary is no Pollyanna, and anyone who has suffered loss will find something to recognise:

My real friends indulge me.
They know the truth.
I don't want to go home
To the violence of silence,
That bloody tap dripping,

That bloody clock ticking,
Waiting for the sound of
My own key in the lock.

One night I'll catch up with myself
And give the real me a good telling-off.

Jenny Brien

Smiles to Go Before I Weep was printed by Ecclesville Printing and is available locally at the Castle Museum or Ramsey's Arts and Crafts, The Butter Market, Enniskillen, or at O'Brien's of Lisnaskea