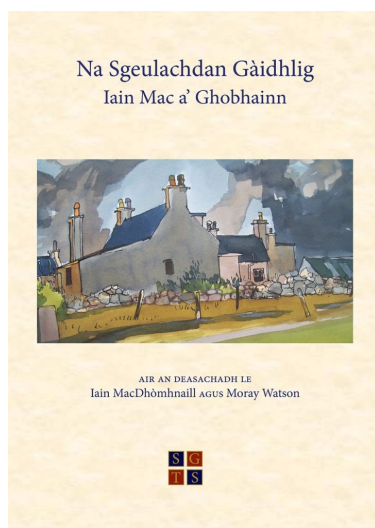


‘Na Sgeulachdan Gàidhlig’, by Iain Mac a’ Ghobhainn

Review by Kevin MacNeil/ Caoimhin MacNèill



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The narratives cover a broad spectrum of styles and concerns. They are by turns philosophical, mischievous, down-to-earth, lyrical. Sometimes they are sublime, making of the quotidian something ineffable. Granted, a few of the stories are a little weak, suffering from thin characterisation, predictable plotting, a reliance on melodrama rather than drama (see, for example, 'An Dealbh-chluiche'). The best of these stories, however, are compelling, thought-provoking, and memorable - a prime example being 'An Teileagram', a narrative that achieves the ideal ending, which is to say one that is unpredicted and inevitable. It is astonishing that this canonical story, which was published in *An Gàidheal* in 1965, never appeared in one of Smith's Gaelic story collections, although the English version, 'The Telegram', was included in the now out-of-print *The Black and the Red and Other Stories* and features in the aforementioned *The Red Door*. Publication of *Na Sgeulachdan Gàidhlig* means we now have access to every Smith short story ever published: a most satisfying state of affairs.

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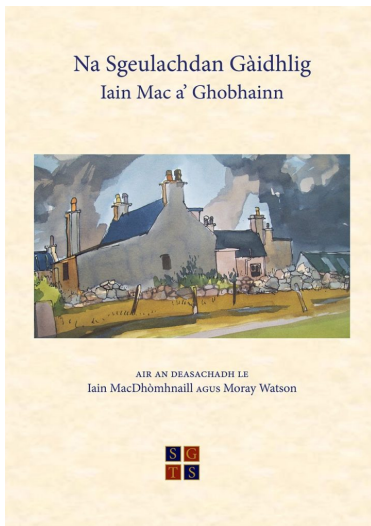
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