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**Winterwood**

Patrick McCabe

Bloomsbury, €9.99

Be afraid, for this is where the afraid things are: where the alienated homespun journalist, Redmond Hatch, tells us the weird and wild tale of his sometimes incognito and usually soused tramping around Ireland and London during the last thirty years; where the old mountainy musician, Pappie Strange, fiddles in more ways than one; where My Little Pony will kick you in the head; where childhood, if it doesn't kill you, can maim you for life; where the bog has neo-cosmopolitans by the throat and sucks them down into the grave; where you will find in the end that the Devil is the very man to call the tune. Be not afraid, for this is where some of the most conceptually daring prose around is currently to be found; where the strange case of contemporary Ireland is actualised alongside the visceral experience of its ways; where modes of character psychiatry are probed and electrified; where the writing of fiction itself has risky and wonderful adventures.

**John Kenny**