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## **Short Stories**

Patrick Pearse

University College Dublin Press, €20

That Pearse's two collections of stories in Irish, *Iosagan and Other Stories* (1907) and *The Mother and Other Stories* (1916), are now brought together under the worthy 'Classics of Irish History' banner is itself a crucial judgment about the literary value of this contentious figure. For, aside from the natural tendency to assimilate every aspect of Pearse to his historical significance, it would be difficult to make an argument for these stories as standalone works of fiction. Their determined fidelity to folk narrative notwithstanding, they simply are not very compelling. It is therefore to the credit of editor Anne Markey, in repackaging the first translation of all ten stories by Belfast poet, Joseph Campbell, for the *Collected Works* (1917), that this volume feels so substantial. Markey's lucid introduction is especially good in discussing Pearse's unities of theme, characterisation and setting, and his nevertheless considerable development between his two collections. While the very useful non-nonsense Editor's Notes at the end emphasise the scholarly dimensions, this could also perform as an excellent Pearse primer.