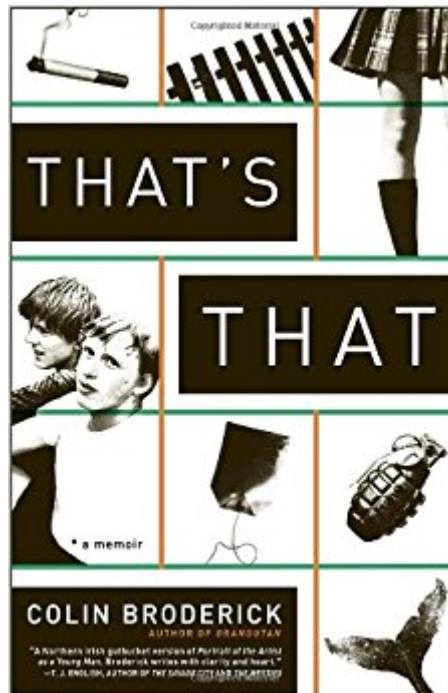




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# That's That: A Memoir



## Synopsis

How can we know who we are if we do not understand where we came from?Â Colin Broderick grew up in Northern Ireland during the period of heightened tension and violence known as the Troubles. Broderick's Catholic family lived in County Tyrone --the heart of rebel country. In *That's That*, he brings us into this world and delivers a deeply personal account of what it was like to come of age in the midst of a war that dragged on for over two decades.Â We watch as he and his brothers play ball with the neighbor children over a fence for years, but are never allowed to play together because it is forbidden. We see him struggle to understand why young men from his community often just disappear. And we feel his frustration when he is held at gunpoint at various military checkpoints in the North. At the center of his worldâ "and this storyâ "is Colinâ "s mother. Desperate to protect her children from harm, she has little patience for Colinâ "s growing need to experience and understand all that is happening around them. Spoken with stern finality, "That's that" became the refrain of Colin's childhood.Â Â Â Â Â The first book to paint a detailed depiction of Northern Ireland's Troubles, *That's That* is told in the wry, memorable voice of a man who's finally come to terms with his past.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An Essay by Colin Broderick It was my agent who suggested I tackle my Northern Irish childhood. I said, â œNo.â • She said, â œI think you should.â • I said, â œNo.â • At the time, I was newly sober, interred in a small cottage in Northern Ireland with wife number three. It was cold, wet, and gray, in a way that only Northern Ireland can be. We were expecting a baby, our first. I was back living in

County Tyrone, a stone's throw from my parents' house, after twenty years away in New York. Being back at home had resurrected in me all the old ghosts of the past throwing my internal compass wildly off kilter. I was in no mood for revisiting childhoods. But my agent had planted a seed, and that seed took root. I started writing *That's That* the same month my daughter Erica was born an Irish citizen. We moved back to New York a few months later and I became consumed with getting to the heart of what had happened to me as a boy. I'd already chronicled the madness of my addiction and alcoholism in my memoir *Orangutan*. It was time to get at the why. I needed to go back into my childhood and look for answers. I had nowhere to turn but inward for the answers, so I dug. The digging was hell. My wife left to avoid the dark. I dug some more. I went a bit mad. I dug some more. I had to. My daughter's future depended upon it. I could see that if I were to rid myself of the shadows that followed me I had to dig on, for clarity, for her. So I dug. What does it mean to be from Northern Ireland? What was the war, The Troubles, all about? How did religion define our nationality? In *That's That* I have used my own childhood as the focal point to paint a vivid portrait of Northern Ireland and The Troubles as a whole. This is a story of a war and a family who survived in the midst of that war. Does it matter to you that this book has already been successful for me? I am indebted to my agent and to the editors who pushed and carried me on through this process. War inevitably robs children of their innocence. This book has helped me finally come to terms with that loss. Northern Irish hunger striker Bobby Sands said famously, "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children." My daughter is the happiest little girl I know.

Starred Review. Broderick (*Orangutan*) was raised in Northern Ireland's County Tyrone during the "Troubles" that spanned nearly four decades. These formative years are told through snippets of daily life: beatings from teachers at his school, conversations with relatives, and various "firsts" as an adolescent. The news of the day—the bombings, kidnappings, and murders of Catholics and Protestants—influenced the everyday routine under his protective mother. Desperate to keep her family safe, she refuses him any independence: "The answer is no, and that's that." With her son on the brink of total rebellion, she relents and Broderick matures from the mischievous, curious altar boy into a teenager with everything to prove and nothing to lose. Somehow, Broderick keeps the reader on the edge of laughter through many otherwise horrifying experiences and bad choices. He is a storyteller of great depth, sharing his life with the kind of brutal honesty and narrative skill rarely expected or found in a memoirist. Broderick is a writer's writer who has achieved a profound telling of his experience of Northern Ireland's Troubles. (May)

Broderick writes beautifully about growing up in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s, during the time of Thatcher's shoot-to-kill policy and the rise of the IRA. For the casual American observer, the IRA was something akin to the PLO or ISIS -- a disreputable bunch of terrorists. But Broderick succeeds in explaining the view of the colonized and dispossessed -- and the arrogance and short-sightedness of the occupiers. Perhaps a middle-eastern equivalent of Broderick could do the same for the PLO. To be sure, one can't quite buy into the policies and choices of the IRA. The British weren't the Nazis, and one wonders whether the approach of Gandhi or King would have been far more effective (as well as more justifiable morally). Even Broderick has serious ambivalence and reluctance when it comes to the IRA's approach -- a sentiment that gives this memoir a great deal of power. Broderick also vividly portrays his strict Irish Catholic upbringing. He writes beautifully and at times poetically about the land, culture, and people of Ireland. Broderick's incipient alcoholism pervades over the memoir and gives it a somber tone. He did write a previous memoir about his substance abuse, which I have not read but which received good reviews. An excellent memoir.

Loved it . This is a simple version of a complicated story . I think he did a great job explaining an Northern Irish mammy and the struggles of growing up there . I'll know i was Able to identify .well written.

good book

I don't have time to read this book, but I can't stop. Every 30 pages or so, I have a new favorite scene. The Galbally boys fight at Kellys Inn, the girl who put out too easily, the make up with the Donnelly clan at the Knockabout place (sorry, pretty sure that's the wrong name) the horrible wake after the Loughhall killings. The Vampire guy. I'm on page 341. I have about 17 more pages, going to save them for later in the week when I'm fresh and not holding my eyes open with my fingers. But I just wanted Colin Broderick to know how great his book is. Thanks mister.

Excellent prequel to Orangutan. It's an amazing coming of age story about a boy who stands for a symbol for an entire country. The writing is so good that you forget it's a book. It feels like a movie in your head. I learned a lot about the culture and life in Northern Ireland. I highly recommend this book. Read it now.

This was such a good read. Colin has an incredible wit and way of conveying his history. I really enjoyed this book and the opportunity to peek into his home and meet his wild Irish family. I also appreciated the history in the fight for their independence from Ireland. I bought and read his first book but read this one first. I read the second one in two sittings. BIG FAN! Hope he still has his life together.

Colin has focused his intense hurt and anger into exceptionally powerful words that let us follow his years growing up and into adulthood. His mother obviously knew much more about what was really happening in Northern Ireland and within her son Colin. Continue to use the power of your pen to open up the reality of life even now in the North with all its "walls" enshrining the same old system. Someone has to "visit" and tell someone, who?, "Tear down these walls!!!"

I was mostly interested due to ancestors from Northern Ireland and a month-long trip touring Ireland a few years ago. I found it insightful and interesting. His style is captivating and this is a good read about difficult and disturbing topics.

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