

The Book of Blaise

Ian MacPherson

Cloudberry Books

Reviewed by Cynthia Rogerson

Ian MacPherson is a funny man. He is funny without even opening his mouth, or moving, much less writing. He probably doesn't want to be funny, much in the way psychics often say they haven't asked for the gift of second sight; in fact it's a nuisance sometimes. I imagine Ian might feel his funny-ness has been thrust upon him, as involuntary as a facial tick. Well, all I can say is: Poor guy, but lucky us.

Ian often performs at the Edinburgh Fringe. I first saw him performing one of his stand-up comedy routines in a town hall in Perth, about twenty years ago. Deadpan and morose-looking, he had the audience in tears (the good kind) after two seconds. He is Irish, which probably helps. The accent and temperament seem well suited to a certain brand of self-mockery. I read his first book, *Deep Probing: The Autobiography of a Genius* at a gallop, just stopping to breathe properly in between spasms. Then I read it again, because I couldn't believe it was really that funny, I must have been coming down with something. But it was that funny, and I have been recommending it ever since as an antidote to depression and/or arrogance. It's sequel, *Posterity Now*, can be read together with the prequel, in *The Autobiography of Ireland's Greatest Living Genius*, published in 2011.

The Book of Blaise is the unapologetically personal account of one man's struggle with the superiority of women, specifically his wife Blaise. The subtitle of the book is *How to Survive the Menopause with your Manhood Intact*. Blaise is menopausal, or so he claims. The reader will see immediately that Blaise is entirely rational and calm, while her husband, the narrator, runs around the house saying scatty things about parenthood, poetry, mother-in-laws, and life in general. He gets in a tizz about all the petty things most of us just ignore. For instance, computer spam about erectile extenders. Or daughters who have grown up despite his insistence they must still be wanting a book about potty training. Why is this funny? Well, obviously it's not funny when I tell it. That's because I am not Irish, or Ian.

I highly recommend this book, even if you are not depressed or arrogant. It's the funniest book I've read since...his last one.

Cynthia Rogerson's novel *I Love You, Goodbye* was shortlisted for the 2011 Scottish Novel of the Year, and developed into a Woman's Hour serial. Her latest novel is *If I Touched the Earth* (Black and White). She is a Royal Literary Fellow at the University of Dundee.