

Derry / Londonderry: The Troubles, Bloody Sunday (Northern Ireland)

Christine Cozzens
Charles A. Dana Professor of English
Agnes Scott College

The suggested readings and films for this part of the trip are

Deane, Seamus. *Reading in the Dark*. New York: Vintage, 1998. ISBN-13: 978-0375700231.

Handouts

Bloody Sunday Poetry (handout)

Films

Bloody Sunday Dir. Stephen Greengrass

In the Name of the Father Dir. Jim Sheridan

Hunger Dir. Steve McQueen

Derry City, Co. Londonderry, NI: Epicenter of The Troubles and City of Reconciliation

Ireland's colonial past, along with economic and social conditions, created a situation in Northern Ireland that pitted Catholics against Protestants. These tensions erupted in a period known as "The Troubles," usually dated from 1969 until 1998, when the Belfast Peace Agreement (also called the Good Friday Agreement) was put into effect. No city suffered more than Londonderry, or "Derry" as it is familiarly known, but no place in NI has shown more resilience or character in rebounding from those dark times and creating a city that models power sharing and reconciliation. We will look at some of the literature from this difficult period and from contemporary Derry, visit the sites that inspired these works, and try to understand how the city and its people have evolved. During our guided tour along the seventeenth-century wall that encircles the city, we will hear Derry's fascinating story, including its founding by Saint Colmcille, the city's important role in the Williamite--Jacobite War and much later in World War II, civil strife during The Troubles, Bloody Sunday in January 1972, the rebuilding of the city and its emergence as a center for reconciliation studies, the opening of the Peace Bridge joining

the two formerly antagonist communities in 2011, and Derry's selection as the inaugural UK City of Culture in 2013.

This handout includes poetry written about Derry, poetry written about Bloody Sunday in Derry (events of January 30, 1972), and Prime Minister David Cameron's speech apologizing for Bloody Sunday on behalf of the British government in June 2010 upon presentation of the Saville Report which, after a twelve-year investigation. Completely exonerated the protestors.

Poems About Derry

from Columcille's Greeting to Ireland

(attributed to St. Columcille (6th century) but probably written after his time)

Translated by William Reeves and Kuno Meyer

Were all Alba mine
From its centre to its border,
I would rather have the site of a house
In the middle of fair Derry.

It is for this I love Derry,
For its quietness, for its purity,
And for its crowds of white angels
From one end to another.

It is for this I love Derry,
For its quietness, for its purity,
All full of angles
Is every leaf on the oaks of Derry.

My Derry, my little oak-grove,
My dwelling and my little cell,
O eternal God in Heaven above,
Woe to him who violates it!

Beloved are Durrow and Derry,
Beloved is Raphoe in purity,
Beloved Drumhome of rich fruits;
Beloved are Swords and Kells.

Beloved also to my heart in the West
Drumcliff on Culcinne's strand:
To gaze upon fair Loch Foyle—

The shape of its shores is delightful.

Delightful is that, and delightful
 The salt main where the sea-gulls cry,
 On my coming from Derry afar,
 It is quiet and it is delightful.
 Delightful.

John Hewitt 1907-1987

Bogside, Derry, 1971

Shielded, vague soliders, visored, crough alert;
 between tall houses down the blackened street
 the hurled stones pour hurt-instinct aims to hurt,
 Frustration spurts in flame about their feet.

Lads who at ease had tossed a laughing ball,
 or, ganged in teams, pursued some shouting game,
 Beat angry fists against the stubborn wall
 Of faceless fears which now at last they name.

Night after night this city yields a stage
 with peak of drama for the pointless day,
 where shadows offer stature, roles to play,
 urging the gestures which might purge in rage
 the slights, the wrongs, the long indignities
 the stubborn core within each heart defies.

Seamus Heaney 1939—2013

Bogland

We have no prairies
 To slice a big sun at evening--
 Everywhere the eye concedes to
 Encrouching horizon,

Is wooed into the cyclops' eye
 Of a tarn. Our unfenced country
 Is bog that keeps crusting
 Between the sights of the sun.

They've taken the skeleton
 Of the Great Irish Elk
 Out of the peat, set it up
 An astounding crate full of air.

Butter sunk under
 More than a hundred years
 Was recovered salty and white.
 The ground itself is kind, black butter

Melting and opening underfoot,
 Missing its last definition
 By millions of years.
 They'll never dig coal here,

Only the waterlogged trunks
 Of great firs, soft as pulp.
 Our pioneers keep striking
 Inwards and downwards,

Every layer they strip
 Seems camped on before.
 The bogholes might be Atlantic seepage.
 The wet centre is bottomless.

Digging

Between my finger and my thumb
 The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun.

Under my window a clean rasping sound
 When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
 My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
 Bends low, comes up twenty years away
 Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
 Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
 Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
 He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep

To scatter new potatoes that we picked
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade,
Just like his old man.

My grandfather could cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, digging down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Bloody Sunday Poetry
(from *The Harrowing of the Heart: The Poetry of Bloody Sunday*, eds. Julieann
Campbell and Tom Herron)

Seamus Heaney 1939-2013

The Road to Derry

On a Wednesday morning early I took the road to Derry
Along Glenshane and Foreglen and the cold woods of Hillhead:
A wet wind in the hedges and a dark cloud on the mountain
And flags like black frost mourning that the thirteen men were dead.

The Roe wept at Dungiven and the Foyle cried out to heaven,
Burntollet's old wound opened and again the Bogside bled;
By Shipquay Gate I shivered and by Lone Moor I enquired
Where I might find the coffins where the thirteen men lay dead.

My heart besieged by anger, my mind a gap of danger.
 I walked among their old haunts, the home ground where they bled;
 And in the dirt lay justice like an acorn in the winter
 Till its oak would sprout in Derry where the thirteen men lay dead.
 (1972)

Casualty

I
 He would drink by himself
 And raise a weathered thumb
 Towards the high shelf,
 Calling another rum
 And blackcurrant, without
 Having to raise his voice,
 Or order a quick stout
 By a lifting of the eyes
 And a discreet dumb-show
 Of pulling off the top;
 At closing time would go
 In waders and peaked cap
 Into the showery dark,
 A dole-kept breadwinner
 But a natural for work.
 I loved his whole manner,
 Sure-footed but too sly,
 His deadpan sidling tact,
 His fisherman's quick eye
 And turned observant back.
 Incomprehensible
 To him, my other life.
 Sometimes on the high stool,
 Too busy with his knife
 At a tobacco plug
 And not meeting my eye,
 In the pause after a slug
 He mentioned poetry.
 We would be on our own
 And, always politic
 And shy of condescension,
 I would manage by some trick
 To switch the talk to eels
 Or lore of the horse and cart
 Or the Provisionals.

But my tentative art
 His turned back watches too:
 He was blown to bits
 Out drinking in a curfew
 Others obeyed, three nights
 After they shot dead
 The thirteen men in Derry.
 PARAS THIRTEEN, the walls said,
 BOGSIDE NIL. That Wednesday
 Everyone held
 His breath and trembled.

II

It was a day of cold
 Raw silence, wind-blown
 Surplice and soutane:
 Rained-on, flower-laden
 Coffin after coffin
 Seemed to float from the door
 Of the packed cathedral
 Like blossoms on slow water.
 The common funeral
 Unrolled its swaddling band,
 Lapping, tightening
 Till we were braced and bound
 Like brothers in a ring.

But he would not be held
 At home by his own crowd
 Whatever threats were phoned,
 Whatever black flags waved.
 I see him as he turned
 In that bombed offending place,
 Remorse fused with terror
 In his still knowable face,
 His cornered outfaced stare
 Blinding in the flash.

He had gone miles away
 For he drank like a fish
 Nightly, naturally
 Swimming towards the lure
 Of warm lit-up places,
 The blurred mesh and murmur

Drifting among glasses
 In the gregarious smoke.
 How culpable was he
 That last night when he broke
 Our tribe's complicity?
 'Now, you're supposed to be
 An educated man,'
 I hear him say. 'Puzzle me
 The right answer to that one.'

III

I missed his funeral,
 Those quiet walkers
 And sideways talkers
 Shoaling out of his lane
 To the respectable
 Purring of the hearse...
 They move in equal pace
 With the habitual
 Slow consolation
 Of a dawdling engine,
 The line lifted, hand
 Over fist, cold sunshine
 On the water, the land
 Banked under fog: that morning
 I was taken in his boat,
 The screw purling, turning
 Indolent fathoms white,
 I tasted freedom with him.
 To get out early, haul
 Steadily off the bottom,
 Dispraise the catch, and smile
 As you find a rhythm
 Working you, slow mile by mile,
 Into your proper haunt
 Somewhere, well out, beyond...

Dawn-sniffing revenant,
 Plodder through midnight rain,
 Question me again.

Thomas Kinsella 1928-

Butcher's Dozen" A Lesson for the Octave of Widgery

I went with Anger at my heel
 Through Bogside of the bitter zeal
 - Jesus pity! - on a day
 Of cold and drizzle and decay.
 A month had passed. Yet there remained
 A murder smell that stung and stained.
 On flats and alleys-over all-
 It hung; on battered roof and wall,
 On wreck and rubbish scattered thick,
 On sullen steps and pitted brick.
 And when I came where thirteen died
 It shrivelled up my heart. I sighed
 And looked about that brutal place
 Of rage and terror and disgrace.
 Then my moistened lips grew dry.
 I had heard an answering sigh!
 There in a ghostly pool of blood
 A crumpled phantom hugged the mud:
 "Once there lived a hooligan.
 A pig came up, and away he ran.
 Here lies one in blood and bones,
 Who lost his life for throwing stones."

More voices rose. I turned and saw
 Three corpses forming, red and raw,
 From dirt and stone. Each upturned face
 Stared unseeing from its place:
 "Behind this barrier, blighters three,
 We scrambled back and made to flee.
 The guns cried Stop, and here lie we."
 Then from left and right they came,
 More mangled corpses, bleeding, lame,
 Holding their wounds. They chose their ground,
 Ghost by ghost, without a sound,
 And one stepped forward, soiled and white:
 "A bomber I. I travelled light
 - Four pounds of nails and gelignite
 About my person, hid so well
 They seemed to vanish where I fell.
 When the bullet stopped my breath
 A doctor sought the cause of death.
 He upped my shirt, undid my fly,

Twice he moved my limbs awry,
 And noticed nothing. By and by
 A soldier, with his sharper eye,
 Beheld the four elusive rockets
 Stuffed in my coat and trouser pockets.
 Yes, they must be strict with us,
 Even in death so treacherous!"
 He faded, and another said:
 "We three met close when we were dead.
 Into an armoured car they piled us
 Where our mingled blood defiled us,
 Certain, if not dead before,
 To suffocate upon the floor.

Careful bullets in the back
 Stopped our terrorist attack,
 And so three dangerous lives are done
 - Judged, condemned and shamed in one."
 That spectre faded in his turn.
 A harsher stirred, and spoke in scorn:
 "The shame is theirs, in word and deed,
 Who prate of justice, practise greed,
 And act in ignorant fury - then,
 Officers and gentlemen,
 Send to their Courts for the Most High
 To tell us did we really die!
 Does it need recourse to law
 To tell ten thousand what they saw?
 Law that lets them, caught red-handed,
 Halt the game and leave it stranded,
 Summon up a sworn inquiry
 And dump their conscience in the diary.
 During which hiatus, should
 Their legal basis vanish, good,
 The thing is rapidly arranged:
 Where's the law that can't be changed?
 The news is out. The troops were kind.
 Impartial justice has to find
 We'd be alive and well today
 If we had let them have their way.
 Yet England, even as you lie,
 You give the facts that you deny.
 Spread the lie with all your power
 - All that's left; it's turning sour.

Friend and stranger, bride and brother,
 Son and sister, father, mother,

All not blinded by your smoke,
 Photographers who caught your stroke,
 The priests that blessed our bodies, spoke
 And wagged our blood in the world's face.
 The truth will out, to your disgrace."
 He flushed and faded. Pale and grim,
 A joking spectre followed him:
 "Take a bunch of stunted shoots,
 A tangle of transplanted roots,
 Ropes and rifles, feathered nests,
 Some dried colonial interests,
 A hard unnatural union grown
 In a bed of blood and bone,
 Tongue of serpent, gut of hog
 Spiced with spleen of underdog.
 Stir in, with oaths of loyalty,
 Sectarian supremacy,
 And heat, to make a proper botch,
 In a bouillon of bitter Scotch.
 Last, the choice ingredient: you.
 Now, to crown your Irish stew,
 Boil it over, make a mess.
 A most imperial success!"
 He capered weakly, racked with pain,
 His dead hair plastered in the rain;
 The group was silent once again.
 It seemed the moment to explain
 That sympathetic politicians
 Say our violent traditions,
 Backward looks and bitterness
 Keep us in this dire distress.
 We must forget, and look ahead,

Nurse the living, not the dead.
 My words died out. A phantom said:
 "Here lies one who breathed his last
 Firmly reminded of the past.
 A trooper did it, on one knee,
 In tones of brute authority."
 That harsher spirit, who before
 Had flushed with anger, spoke once more:

"Simple lessons cut most deep.
 This lesson in our hearts we keep:
 Persuasion, protest, arguments,
 The milder forms of violence,
 Earn nothing but polite neglect.
 England, the way to your respect
 Is via murderous force, it seems;
 You push us to your own extremes.
 You condescend to hear us speak
 Only when we slap your cheek.
 And yet we lack the last technique:
 We rap for order with a gun,
 The issues simplify to one
 - Then your Democracy insists
 You mustn't talk with terrorists!
 White and yellow, black and blue,
 Have learnt their history from you:
 Divide and ruin, muddle through,
 Not principled, but politic.
 - In strength, perfidious; weak, a trick
 To make good men a trifle sick.
 We speak in wounds. Behold this mess.
 My curse upon your politesse."

Another ghost stood forth, and wet
 Dead lips that had not spoken yet:
 "My curse on the cunning and the bland,
 On gentlemen who loot a land
 They do not care to understand;
 Who keep the natives on their paws
 With ready lash and rotten laws;
 Then if the beasts erupt in rage
 Give them a slightly larger cage
 And, in scorn and fear combined,
 Turn them against their own kind.
 The game runs out of room at last,
 A people rises from its past,
 The going gets unduly tough
 And you have (surely ... ?) had enough.
 The time has come to yield your place
 With condescending show of grace
 - An Empire-builder handing on.
 We reap the ruin when you've gone,
 All your errors heaped behind you:

Promises that do not bind you,
 Hopes in conflict, cramped commissions,
 Faiths exploited, and traditions."
 Bloody sputum filled his throat.
 He stopped and coughed to clear it out,
 And finished, with his eyes a-glow:
 "You came, you saw, you conquered ... So.
 You gorged - and it was time to go.
 Good riddance. We'd forget - released -
 But for the rubbish of your feast,
 The slops and scraps that fell to earth
 And sprang to arms in dragon birth.

Sashed and bowler-hatted, glum
 Apprentices of fife and drum,
 High and dry, abandoned guards
 Of dismal streets and empty yards,
 Drilled at the codeword 'True Religion'
 To strut and mutter like a pigeon
 'Not An Inch - Up The Queen';
 Who use their walls like a latrine
 For scribbled magic-at their call,
 Straight from the nearest music-hall,
 Pope and Devil intertwine,
 Two cardboard kings appear, and join
 In one more battle by the Boyne!
 Who could love them? God above..."
 "Yet pity is akin to love,"
 The thirteenth corpse beside him said,
 Smiling in its bloody head,
 "And though there's reason for alarm
 In dourness and a lack of charm
 Their cursed plight calls out for patience.
 They, even they, with other nations
 Have a place, if we can find it.
 Love our changeling! Guard and mind it.
 Doomed from birth, a cursed heir,
 Theirs is the hardest lot to bear,
 Yet not impossible, I swear,
 If England would but clear the air
 And brood at home on her disgrace
 - Everything to its own place.
 Face their walls of dole and fear
 And be of reasonable cheer.

Good men every day inherit
 Father's foulness with the spirit,
 Purge the filth and do not stir it.
 Let them out! At least let in
 A breath or two of oxygen,
 So they may settle down for good
 And mix themselves in the common blood.
 We are what we are, and that
 Is mongrel pure. What nation's not
 Where any stranger hung his hat
 And seized a lover where she sat?"
 He ceased and faded. Zephyr blew
 And all the others faded too.
 I stood like a ghost. My fingers strayed
 Along the fatal barricade.
 The gentle rainfall drifting down
 Over Colmcille's town
 Could not refresh, only distil
 In silent grief from hill to hill.

Seamus Deane 1940-

After Derry, 30 January 1972

Lightnings slaughtered
 The distance. In the harmless houses
 Faces narrowed. The membrane
 Of power darkened
 Above the valley,
 And in a flood of khaki
 Burst. Indigoed
 As rain they came
 As the thunder radioed
 For a further
 Haemorrhage of flame.

The roads died, the clocks
 Went out. The peace
 Had been a delicately flawed
 Honeymoon signalling
 The fearful marriage
 To come. Death had been

A form of doubt.
Now it was moving
Like a missionary
Through the collapsed cities
Converting all it came among.

And when the storm passed
We came out of the back rooms
Wishing we could say
Ruin itself would last.
But the dead would not
Listen. Nor could we speak
Of love. Brothers had been
Pitiless. What could ignite
This sodden night?
Let us bury the corpses
Fast. Death is our future.

And now is our past
There are new children
In the gaunt houses.
Their eyes are fused.
Youth has gone out
Like a light. Only the insects
Grovel for life, their strange heads
Twitching. No one kills them
Anymore. This is the honeymoon
Of the cockroach, the small
Spiderless eternity of the fly.

David Cameron's Apology for Bloody Sunday, June 10, 2010

<http://www.bbc.com/news/10322295>

This is the full transcript of the statement Prime Minister David Cameron made to MPs in the House of Commons on the day the Bloody Sunday report was published.

"The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is publishing the report of the Saville inquiry - the tribunal set up by the previous government to investigate the tragic events of 30 January 1972, a day more commonly known as Bloody Sunday.

We have acted in good faith by publishing the tribunal's findings as soon as possible after the general election.

Mr Speaker, I am deeply patriotic. I never want to believe anything bad about our country. I never want to call into question the behaviour of our soldiers and our army, who I believe to be the finest in the world.

And I have seen for myself the very difficult and dangerous circumstances in which we ask our soldiers to serve.

But the conclusions of this report are absolutely clear. There is no doubt, there is nothing equivocal, there are no ambiguities. What happened on Bloody Sunday was both unjustified and unjustifiable. It was wrong.

'Loss of self-control'

Lord Saville concludes that the soldiers of the support company who went into the Bogside did so as a result of an order which should not have been given by their commander.

He finds that, on balance, the first shot in the vicinity of the march was fired by the British Army.

He finds that none of the casualties shot by the soldiers of support company was armed with a firearm.

He finds that there was some firing by Republican paramilitaries but none of this firing provided any justification for the shooting of civilian casualties.

And he finds that, in no case, was any warning given by soldiers before opening fire.

He also finds that the support company reacted by losing their self-control, forgetting or ignoring their instructions and training and with a serious and widespread loss of fire discipline.

He finds that despite the contrary evidence given by the soldiers, none of them fired in response to attacks or threatened attacks by nail or petrol bombers.

And he finds that many of the soldiers - and I quote knowingly - put forward false accounts to seek to justify their firing.

'Crawling away'

Lord Saville says that some of those killed or injured were clearly fleeing or going to the assistance of others who were dying.

The report refers to one person who was shot while crawling away from the soldiers. Another was shot in all probability when he was lying mortally wounded on the ground.

The report refers to the father who was hit and injured by army gunfire after going to attend to his son.

For those looking for statements of innocence, Saville says that the immediate responsibility for the deaths and injuries on Bloody Sunday lies with those members of support company whose unjustifiable firing was the cause of those deaths and injuries.

Crucially, that, and I quote, none of the casualties was posing a threat of causing death or serious injury or indeed was doing anything else that could, on any view, justified in shooting.

For those people who are looking for the report to use terms like murder and unlawful killing, I remind the House that these judgments are not matters for a tribunal or politicians to determine.

Mr Speaker, these are shocking conclusions to read and shocking words to have to say. But Mr Speaker, you do not defend the British Army by defending the indefensible.

We do not honour all those who have served with such distinction in keeping the peace and upholding the rule of law in Northern Ireland by hiding from the truth.

There is no point in trying to soften or equivocate what is in this report. It is clear from the tribunal's authoritative conclusions that the events of Bloody Sunday were in no way justified.

'Deeply sorry'

I know that some people wonder whether, nearly 40 years on from an event, [if] a prime minister needs to issue an apology.

For someone of my generation, Bloody Sunday and the early 1970s are something we feel we have learnt about rather than lived through.

But what happened should never, ever have happened. The families of those who died should not have had to live with the pain and the hurt of that day and with a lifetime of loss.

Some members of our armed forces acted wrongly. The government is ultimately responsible for the conduct of the armed forces and for that, on behalf of the government, indeed, on behalf of our country, I am deeply sorry.

Mr Speaker, just as this report is clear that the actions of that day were unjustifiable, so too is it clear in some of its other findings.

Those looking for premeditation, a plan, those even looking for a conspiracy involving senior politicians or senior members of the armed forces, they will not find it in this report.

Indeed, Lord Saville finds no evidence that the events of Bloody Sunday were premeditated, he concludes that the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland governments and the army neither tolerated nor encouraged the use of unjustified lethal force.

He makes no suggestion of a government cover up.

Mr Speaker, the report also specifically deals with the actions of key individuals in the army, in politics and beyond, including Major-General Ford, Brigadier McLellan, and Lieutenant Colonel Wilford.

In each case, the findings are clear. It does the same for Martin McGuinness. It specifically finds he was present and probably armed with a sub-machine gun but it concludes, and I quote, "we're sure that he did not engage in any activity that provided any of the soldiers with any justification for opening fire".

'Bloodiest year'

Mr Speaker, while in no way justifying the events of January 30th, 1972, we should acknowledge the background to the events of Bloody Sunday.

Since 1969, the security situation in Northern Ireland had been declining significantly.

Three days before Bloody Sunday, two RUC officers, one a Catholic, were shot by the IRA in Londonderry, the first police officers killed in the city during the Troubles.

A third of the City of Derry had become a no-go area for the RUC and the Army. And in the end, 1972 was to prove Northern Ireland's bloodiest year by far, with nearly 500 people killed.

And let us also remember, Bloody Sunday is not the defining story of the service the British Army gave in Northern Ireland from 1969-2007.

This was known as Operation Banner, the longest continuous operation in British military history, spanning 38 years and in which over 250,000 people served.

Our armed forces displayed enormous courage and professionalism in upholding democracy and the rule of law in Northern Ireland.

Acting in support of the police, they played a major part in setting the conditions that have made peaceful politics possible.

And over 1,000 members - 1,000 members - of the security forces lost their lives to that cause.

Without their work, the peace process would not have happened.

Of course, some mistakes were undoubtedly made, but lessons were also learned.

And once again, I put on record the immense debt of gratitude we all owe to those who served in Northern Ireland.

'Long campaign'

Mr Speaker, may I also thank the tribunal for its work and all those who displayed great courage in giving evidence.

I would also like to acknowledge the grief of the families of those killed.

They have pursued their long campaign over 38 years with great patience. Nothing can bring back those who were killed, but I hope, as one relative has put it, the truth coming out can help set people free.

John Major said he was open to a new inquiry, Tony Blair then set it up. This was accepted by the leader of the opposition. Of course, none of us anticipated that the Saville inquiry would take 12 years or cost almost £200m. Our views on that are well-documented.

It is right to pursue the truth with vigour and thoroughness, but let me reassure the House there will be no more open-ended and costly inquiries into the past.

Today is not about the controversies surrounding the process, it is about the substance, about what this report tells us.

Everyone should have the chance to examine its complete findings and that is why it is being published in full.

Running to more than 5,000 pages, it is being published in 10 volumes.

Naturally, it will take all of us some time to digest the report's full findings and understand its implications. The House will have an opportunity for a full day's debate this autumn, and in the meantime the Secretaries of State in Northern Ireland for Defence will report back to me on all the issues which arise from it.

'Close painful chapter'

Mr Speaker, this report and the inquiry itself demonstrate how a state should hold itself to account and how we should be determined at all times, no matter how difficult, to judge ourselves against the highest standards.

Openness and frankness about the past, however painful, they do not make us weaker, they make us stronger.

That is one of the things that differentiates us from the terrorists. We should never forget that over 3,500 people from every community lost their lives in Northern Ireland, the overwhelming majority killed by terrorists.

There were many terrible atrocities. Politically-motivated violence was never justified, whichever side it came from. And it can never be justified by those criminal gangs that today want to draw Northern Ireland back to its bitter and bloody past.

No government I lead will ever put those who fight to defend democracy on an equal footing with those who continue to seek to destroy it.

But neither will we hide from the truth that confronts us today.

In the words of Lord Saville, what happened on Bloody Sunday strengthened the Provisional IRA, increased hostility towards the Army and exacerbated the violent conflict of the years that followed.

Bloody Sunday was a tragedy for the bereaved and the wounded and a catastrophe for the people of Northern Ireland.

Those are words we cannot and must not ignore. But I hope what this report can also do is mark the moment where we come together in this House and in the communities we represent to acknowledge our shared history, even where it divides us.

And come together to close this painful chapter on Northern Ireland's troubled past.

That is not to say we should ever forget or dismiss the past, but we must also move on. Northern Ireland has been transformed over the last 20 years and all of us in Westminster and Stormont must continue that work of change, coming together with all the people of Northern Ireland to build a stable, peaceful, prosperous and shared future.

And it is with that determination that I commend this statement to the house."

Discussion Questions for Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*

1. The title of the novel refers to the narrator's practice of reading in bed when he was supposed to be sleeping. What other possible meanings does this phrase have in the novel?
2. That same chapter refers to the "Shan Van Vocht," a song popularized during the Rebellion of 1798. Look up the song and consider the relevance of the song and that failed rebellion to the novel's story.
3. The narrator of the story is unnamed. Why do you think Seamus Deane made that choice?
4. The book is divided into many small chapters and does not offer a completely continuous narrative. What are the pros and cons of that approach to novel organization? Why do you think Deane tells the story in this way?
5. Describe the narrator's relationships with his father and with his mother. What role do "secrets" play in both relationships and in the family? Why are there so many secrets?
6. Why do the narrator and his family have such a contentious relationship with the police?
7. What about the family's relationship with the church in the novel? Is it a positive or negative one? Compare the role of the church and that of the police? Any important similarities?
8. The novel covers a period of "troubles" that precedes and overlaps with the first few years of the modern era known as "The Troubles" (1969-1998). What do we learn about Derry from 1921-1971? How does this earlier period set the stage for the violence of The Troubles and incidents like Bloody Sunday, 30- January 1972?
9. Review incidents of the supernatural or perceived supernatural in the story. Some have to do with religion, some with myth, some with superstition. What do these encounters add to the story? What do they say about life in Derry in the forties and fifties?
10. The novel is largely autobiographical. Seamus Deane became a writer, poet, and academic; what future do you see for the narrator? Does he make peace with his family and his life in Derry or not? Why do you suppose Seamus Deane and many other people from Northern Ireland have chosen to live elsewhere as adults?