

## Chapter 1 : George Mackay Brown - Wikipedia

*George Mackay Brown (17 October - 13 April ) was a Scottish poet, author and dramatist, whose work has a distinctly Orcadian character. He is considered one of the great Scottish poets of the 20th century.*

Edit Stromness, Orkney Islands. Photo by Gus Macdonald. Licensed under Creative Commons, courtesy Geograph. George Mackay Brown was the youngest of six children, born to John Brown, a tailor and postman, and Mhairi Mackay ; she had been brought up in Braal Castle, Strathy, Sutherland as a native Gaelic speaker. Due to illness his father was restricted in his work and received no pension and there was a family history of depression. The body was found in Stromness harbour in This illness kept him from entering the army at the start of World War II and it afflicted him to such an extent that he could not live a normal working life; [6] however, it was because of this that he had the time and space in which to write. When the first bar opened in Mackay Brown first tasted alcohol, which he found to be "a revelation; they flushed my veins with happiness; they washed away all cares and shyness and worries. Muir wrote in the foreword: Only three hundred copies were printed, and the imprint sold out within a fortnight. It was acclaimed in the local press. It was warmly received. Brown was briefly engaged to her, and began a correspondence that would continue till her death in This followed about twenty-five years of pondering his religious beliefs. But this conversion was not marked by any change in his daily habits, including his drinking. He met Seamus Heaney there although his nervous condition reduced his ability to enjoy his time there. Subsequently Davies - who came to live in Rackwick - based a number of his works on the poetry and prose of George Mackay Brown. The characters, with one exception, are not portrayed in any psychological depths.. Davies used it as the basis of his opera The Martyrdom of St Magnus. His columns in The Orcadian continued from to the end of his life; [49] a first collection of these columns was published as Letter from Hamnavoe in They had a brief affair, and remained friends for the rest of his life. He said in early that this had been his most productive winter as a writer. But he maintained his working routine throughout. She died in Two Orkney Stories and some poems in The wreck of the Archangel, a volume of poetry. The service was presided over by Rev.

**Chapter 2 : Andrina, George Mackay Brown | Essay Example**

*The late George Mackay Brown was a seminal figure in Scottish letters from mid-century until his death in Brown wrote of life and nature in his native Orkney Islands, his fertile imagination encompassing poetry, novels, children's stories, essays, plays, and media pieces.*

Get Full Essay Get access to this section to get all help you need with your essay and educational issues. The story focuses on the protagonist, Torvald, as he is visited by the mysterious Andrina who cares for him throughout winter. However, when Andrina fails to appear after several days, Torvald "realising he knows nothing about the girl" goes in search of her, only to find nobody else on the island has any knowledge of her existence. The inner story is then introduced as Torvald starts to think about the past he refused to inform Andrina of. Torvald refused to tell Andrina about this romance as he is ashamed of what he did "he left Sigrid after finding out she was pregnant. The outer story is then reintroduced as Torvald reads a letter, sent to him by Sigrid, and discovers that not only is Andrina his granddaughter but she actually passed away before she started visiting him. This leads the reader to believe that Andrina visited Torvald in spirit form. The characterisation of Torvald shows an old man who is in need of companionship to save him from loneliness. Andrina comes across as a very caring person as we see the things she does for Torvald, we assume, everyday. We also get to see how much Torvald needs her: He feels letdown by Andrina when she fails to appear as he no longer has anyone to care for him, and feels she has left him in his time of need; he has the flu. The reader again sees how much Torvald needs Andrina when he describes how he would feel if he saw her: The dramatic image suggests that Andrina is saving Torvald, or could save him from being lost and lonely, just as a bell-buoy would save a stranded sailor. He needs her to guide him, like a bell-buoy would a sailor. He begins to count down the days, hoping Andrina will appear: This shows a sense of longing and monotony; he is just sitting around day-by-day waiting on Andrina to come back. Torvald is a man who is quite selfish and very quick to judge. The reader sees this from the outer story and then again from the inner story: The reader gets the impression that Torvald is feeling quite depressed at this point and that may be why he is beginning to think more about his past. Andrina is not the only person Torvald has ever felt betrayed him, Sigrid also betrayed him. Many people would see this as inappropriate as the baby would be born out of wedlock which was seen as socially unacceptable back then. When he finds out, Torvald feel extremely betrayed and no longer wants to be with Sigrid: These lines contrast with the long flowing lines that came before the news, when everything was normal and the couple felt like they were the happiest people alive. Despite the statement being ironic the reader can see how much Andrina loves her Gran. She is shocked to find out he abandoned her Gran at a time where she would have needed him. Brown uses both first person narrative and third person narrative to move between the inner and outer story: Similarly the use of poetic language in the inner story also reinforces the real act of betrayal by Torvald against his first love Sigrid: This is effective in making the betrayal of Sigrid all the more cruel as it is hard to imagine how Torvald could ruin the loving relationship he and Sigrid had just because he found out she was pregnant. The reader finds it hard to believe how a couple that cared so strongly for one another could not work together and save their relationship when they find out the news. He successfully conveys this theme through a number of techniques and has the reader becoming thoroughly involved in the story. This universal theme has many strands in this short story giving it wide understanding, and is something that many people for generations will be able to relate to. More essays like this:

**Chapter 3 : George Mackay Brown () - Find A Grave Memorial**

*'When all the dancers and masks had gone inside His cold stare Returned to its true task, interrogation of silence.'*  
George Mackay Brown was born in Stromness, Orkney, on 17 October

His themes, which may be called religious, are derived from Norse sagas and Catholicism. See also Contemporary Authors, Vols. George Mackay Brown knows where he is. His middle name has the tang-smack of ancient clanship and his poems testify all the time to his fascinated, localised convictions about Orkney-landscape and Orkney-folk past and present. Depict he does, as poets have rightly done ever since vocabulary caught on; and his local colour, in fact his total effect, is of a mature distillation and blend by an excellent and unmistakable poet patiently subdued by, and to, the demands of his terrain. For the poem-comber place-names are scattered about like saer-skels: And lovers Unblessed by steeples, lay under The buttered bannock of the moon. Then, for the wayfarer, curious poetic runes abound: He once riveted boat to whale. Frail-fingered now He weaves crab prisons. Spare, quiet, visually perceptive, they are idiosyncratic fussless tokens of a way of living and viewing. Autumn, a moulted parrot, eyes with terror This weird white cat. It drifts the rose-bush under. History, for both good and ill, is certainly exemplary; and to George Mackay Brown it is also red-haired and blond and cyclic. In 'Fishermen with Ploughs', he has taken on a task indeed: A 9th Century Norse tribe, refugees from the Dragon of outrageous fortune, sail west, fatalistic but hopeful of an agricultural survival. No flame is needed To warm ghosts and nettle and rat. George Mackay Brown knows where he is and writes with a local and natural authority. Most of his work has the Scandinavian quality of the letter K in Orkney, and all his work to date has been a persistent devotion, not because he is running in runic circles but digging, rooting deeper. George Mackay Brown is a poet. Greenvoe is his first novel. The beauty and precision of his style, where the right word stands in place of three or four near-right words, and the vividness of his imagery all point to the disciplines and perceptions of the poet. That he is also a novelist is demonstrated best in his characters. They are so firmly fleshed and he has endowed them with such vitality that they have that rare quality of seeming to live outside of and beyond the narrative. Magnus is almost a novel, yet more a kind of compilation of narrative and reflective prose, verse, and even one section of drama, round a central theme. Mr Brown is a uniquely observant and skilful chronicler of life in his native Orkneys, past and present; this is the subject he has made his own, which he rarely strays from, and which he treats in writing where everything from a savage terseness to a sustained grandeur of cadence lies at his command. But he has occasionally "here, for example, and in the long poem-sequence, Fishermen with Ploughs" sought to arrange it all round one event. The result is a collection of magnificent pieces which do not quite fit together to achieve the desired unity. The narrative proceeds through these episodes in a series of impressive set-pieces: And, despite the story, the Christian moral and the linking symbolism, the book remains an assemblage of brilliant fragments, nothing ever less than superbly observant, and arresting, yet oddly unsatisfactory when put together. In his individual short stories, in his sets of unconnected poems, Mr Brown evokes without strain "and as no one else can" a world of starkness and beauty to which he brings a deep, alert, compassionate understanding. In his more structured books there is a sense of strain about the attempt to draw it all together. The bursting life of the best individual pieces pulls things apart. Scotland and Ireland possibly Wales are the only places in the English-speaking world where "the people" not all, but many are worth overhearing, their daily talk, melodic and inventive, uncontaminated by the international-urban sludge that is fouling the stream of the richest language on earth. Brown achieved [the] crystallized eloquence [of his "Runes"] with canny sophistication, formed on the way by graduate studies in Gerard Manley Hopkins and the authorship of three volumes of prose fiction. Yet where, between Skelton and Keats, would one place the wintry-lyrical next-to-last stanza of "The Funeral of Ally Flett"? George Mackay Brown is giving back to poetry much of its ancient courtesy "Greek or Norse: They are British only by circumstances of history and geography and not identity. His poems attempt to make the special case of the Orkneys "and perhaps all remote communities" seem reasonable. He concentrates on a place; and the regret of his poems is that a community, seen to be at one time content with its appropriate ways of earning

a living and the kind of society that its cultural inheritance had formed, is on the verge of total alteration, its once necessary unanimity corrupted by individual materialism and collective helplessness. Strenuously over-poetic efforts did produce the occasional success. It also shows that from the beginning Brown was prepared to associate his writing with outlier Celtic styles, the big bardic puff. Imagination perceives what the eye might have seen rather than what the ear can revel in as a substitute for sense. His new idiom is a lucid counterpart of subject, but is at the same time under a formal control that does not neglect musicality. It uses the simplest method of telling a story; episodes and characters follow each other in a sequence of regular verses of eight lines of uneven length. The lyrical finish of the poem is beautifully accommodated to a concrete, visualised narrative. Brown, as a poet of remote island communities and unindustrial, non-urban landscapes, is at odds with the tradition of modern poetry. He is, in some ways, like Vernon Watkins, who adhered to a post-Modernist climate but maintained interests remote from it, and even antagonistic to the ways of life most contemporary poems arise from. Muir was like this, too, although his commitment to Modernism was critical and thoughtful; it is perhaps the Christianity of these poets that makes them seem apart from the way modern poetry has developed, and at once a criticism of the nature of that development. Local traditions also die hard. His observations of reality are to be seen as corrupt, contemporary life in a time-scale of mundane history, and also in a timelessness of landscape. When excessive alliteration and heavy rhythm usually to do with the sea seem to intrude on the contemporary veracity of his observations, it is like an unconscious recall of the past making itself felt. He celebrates an ideal of community. At the centre is an imaginary town of Hamnavoe, the microcosm of the Orkneys, and a disguising cipher for the town of Stromness where Brown lives. Scottish poetry is often particularly regional, of a special place. Burns in Ayrshire, Fergusson in Edinburgh. Satisfying as an extreme gesture the final blow may be; he imagines it, and in a poetry with such overtly social implications a quick downward thrust of the hand of an atomic God hardly suggests that there is a solution for the problems of remote communities in life. Pessimism too easily takes the form of a hideous mushroom. His objectivity is welcome, subordinated to passionate intention as it is. Instead of adopting a representative stance, he shows himself as a poet of community, of shared destiny, whose craft and insights are at the service of his neighbours. He writes from diffused experience, his passion deriving from concerns larger than himself. Even if one looks in his contemporary poems for personal testimony, evidence that what happens to the poet might prove the truth of his generalisations, one is likely to find the absence of subjective attitudes compensated by fidelity to a handful of themes consistently worked. The first is his rapid dismissal of The City; there is nothing in his writing prepared to admit the possibility of an Ideal Cosmopolis; and he seems unprepared to acknowledge the many writers and thinkers who have imagined such an ideal. Nostalgia for the better community is, in my view, a valid poetic activity; retrospection is at least one way of visualising an antidote to what in contemporary society has nothing to do with virtue and goodness. Brown may have gone over the score in Fishermen With Ploughs, but his complaint is real enough, and magnified by the present activities of those concerned with North Sea Oil. He involves our sympathy for ordinary people, for the idea of a whole community, and not for those for whom they provide the taxman, the landlord, or the tourist. In his best work, he solves all the problems of the poet who wants to be both bucolic, real, hard and northern. There is a general rejection of Modernity, for example. His deep hatred of the materialist phase of History arises from mystical conceptions of time, not political ones, and this in spite of a bitter awareness of the root causes of what has altered the Orcadian ways of life. It has more to do with exploitation, capitalist manners, and political neglect, than looking up funnels of darkness at the tantalising galaxies. But Brown must have it both ways; even a mystical-religious poet cannot evade reality when it washes up the rubbish of the Age on to his beaches. He seems to be saying that the Cosmos as viewed from the Orkneys below is his true subject; the rest is temporal dross, side-issues, a tiresome necessity to face what is only too observable. There is a latent moral strategy in this, a creeping ambivalence. By espousing what is vast and unknowable, Brown is able to think of present time with at least a muted amount of contempt. And it is possible to sympathise with a poet in such a dilemma; if only, that is, he would not use his ultimate belief to crucify a world which, whether we like it or not, or whether Brown likes it or not, is the only one we are ever likely to have. For all his fixity and local commitment, Brown is, in poetical terms, unsettled; he is looking at the stars, dreaming of

the stars, but round his feet are rusting tin cans, old tyres, beached poisoned fish, while just over the horizon Americans in safety helmets and boilersuits are sinking their oil wells. Although he dramatises the activities of lairds and landlords, visitations of the taxman, depopulation by the magnet of urban prosperity, there is a wholesale withdrawal in his writing from political decision, or even outright social criticism. Regret, fear, premonitions of a general worsening—moving, and poetic; but the passion that is obviously behind his writing, and the humanity that dictates censorship of self and private emergency in a gesture of communal humility, might also be seen to demand a stridency outwith that represented by the dire trick of Apocalypse. No radical interpretations are offered, only a wiping out. He accepts Time and its consequences, what other men do. We are left with an impression of far-off turbulence. He accepts corruption and exploitation with the inert grin of the man happy with what survives, but wanting more because he knows all that there used to be, preferring to outline an ideal by retrospection, creating an image of the past to act as a spell against the present and future. Having been convinced by the best of what Brown has written, my feeling is that a bit more is called for, a harshness and indignation that Brown might be unsuited by temperament, or poetic beliefs, to provide.

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Here is a work for poets- Carve the runes Then be content with silence last three lines from "A Work for Poets" [1] George Mackay Brown was born on 17 October Due to illness his father was restricted in his work and received no pension. This illness kept him from entering the army at the start of World War II and it afflicted him to such an extent that he could not live a normal working life; [7] however, it was because of this that he had the time and space in which to write. He did start work in with The Orkney Herald, writing on Stromness news, [8] and soon became a prolific journalist. When the first bar opened in Mackay Brown first tasted alcohol, which he found to be "a revelation; they flushed my veins with happiness; they washed away all cares and shyness and worries. Muir wrote in the foreword: Only three hundred copies were printed, and the imprint sold out within a fortnight. It was acclaimed in the local press. It was warmly received. Brown was briefly engaged to her, and began a correspondence that would continue till her death in This followed about twenty-five years of pondering his religious beliefs. This conversion was not marked by any change in his daily habits, including his drinking. He met Seamus Heaney there, although his nervous condition reduced his ability to enjoy his time there. Subsequently, Davies " who came to live in Rackwick " based a number of his works on the poetry and prose of George Mackay Brown. The characters, with one exception, are not portrayed in any psychological depths. Davies used it as the basis of his opera The Martyrdom of St Magnus. His columns in The Orcadian continued from to the end of his life; [52] a first collection of these columns was published as Letter from Hamnavoe in They had a brief affair, and remained friends for the rest of his life. He said in early that this had been his most productive winter as a writer. She died in Two Orkney Stories and some poems in The wreck of the Archangel, a volume of poetry. The Oxford visit coincided with the centenary of the death of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Beside the Ocean of Time covers over eight hundred years of Orkney history through the dreams of an Orkney schoolboy. The first copies were delivered to his home on the day that he died. The service was presided over by Rev.

**Chapter 5 : George Mackay Brown - George Mackay Brown Biography - Poem Hunter**

*George Mackay Brown: George Mackay Brown, Scottish writer who celebrated Orkneyan life and its ancient rhythms in verse, short stories, and novels. Brown was the son of a Gaelic-speaking Highlander and an Orkney postman.*

He is considered one of the great Scottish poets of the 20th century. George Mackay Brown was born on 17 October. The youngest of six children, his parents were John Brown, a tailor and postman, and Mhairi Mackay, who had been brought up in Braal, a hamlet near Strathy, Sutherland as a native Gaelic speaker. Except for periods as a mature student on mainland Scotland, Brown lived all his life in the town of Stromness in the Orkney islands. Due to illness his father was restricted in his work and received no pension. This illness kept him from entering the army at the start of World War II and it afflicted him to such an extent that he could not live a normal working life; however, it was because of this that he had the time and space in which to write. He did start work in with The Orkney Herald, writing on Stromness news, and soon became a prolific journalist. After this he was helped in his development as a writer by Ernest Marwick, whose criticism he valued, and Robert Rendall. When the first bar opened in Mackay Brown first tasted alcohol, which he found to be "a revelation; they flushed my veins with happiness; they washed away all cares and shyness and worries. Subsequently alcohol played a considerable part in his life, although he says, "I never became an alcoholic, mainly because my guts quickly staled". He was a mature student at Newbattle Abbey College in the "session", where the poet Edwin Muir, who would have a great influence on his life as a writer, was warden. His return for the following session was interrupted by the recurrence of tuberculosis. Having had poems published in several periodicals, his first volume of poems, *The Storm*, was published by the Orkney Press in Muir wrote in the foreword: Only three hundred copies were printed, and the imprint sold out within a fortnight. It was acclaimed in the local press. Brown studied English literature at the University of Edinburgh. After publication of poems in a literary magazine, with the help of Muir, Brown had a second volume *Loaves and Fishes* published by the Hogarth Press in It was warmly received. During this period he met, and drank in Rose Street Edinburgh with, many of the Scottish poets of his time: Brown was briefly engaged to her, and began a correspondence that would continue till her death in In late Brown commenced teacher training at Moray House College of Education, but was unable to remain in Edinburgh because of ill-health. It was at this time that he was received into the Roman Catholic Church, being baptised on 23 December and taking communion on the following day. This followed about twenty-five years of pondering his religious beliefs. This conversion was not marked by any change in his daily habits, including his drinking. After a period of unemployment, and the rejection of a volume of poetry by the Hogarth Press, Brown did post-graduate study on Gerard Manley Hopkins, although academic study was not to his taste. This provided some occupation and income until , when a volume of poetry, *The Year of the Whale*, was accepted. Brown now found himself able to support himself financially for the first time, as he received new commissions. He received a bursary from the Scottish Arts Council in December and he was working on the volume of short stories, *A Calendar of Love*, which was issued, to critical acclaim, in February He was still troubled by his excessive drinking, and that of Stella Cartwright. Meanwhile, he had been working on *An Orkney Tapestry*, which includes essays about Orkney and some more imaginative pieces. He met Seamus Heaney there, although his nervous condition reduced his ability to enjoy his time there. In *A Time to Keep*, a collection of short stories, was published, and it received a very positive welcome. Meanwhile, *An Orkney Tapestry* was proving to be a commercial success. Brown met the musician Peter Maxwell Davies in Rackwick during the summer of Subsequently Davies "who came to live in Rackwick" based a number of his works on the poetry and prose of George Mackay Brown. The characters, with one exception, are not portrayed in any psychological depths. The exception is Mrs Mckee, mother of the alcoholic minister; he had intended her to be a minor character but he said of her, "I grew to love her more and more as the novel unfolded". When the novel was published in May it appeared somewhat prophetic because of the oil exploration beginning in the Orkney area. But the resultant degree of celebrity was a trial to him. The story of the life of Magnus Erlendsson, Earl of Orkney was one to which Brown frequently turned, and it was the theme of his next novel,

Magnus, published in 1926. The novel examined the themes of sanctity and self-sacrifice. Brown takes the theme of sacrifice into the twentieth century by inserting, in journalistic language, an account of the death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Davies used it as the basis of his opera *The Martyrdom of St Magnus*. Nevertheless, he maintained a stream of writing: His columns in *The Orcadian* continued from to the end of his life; a first collection of these columns was published as *Letter from Hamnavoe* in 1931. They had a brief affair, and remained friends for the rest of his life. He said in early 1931 that this had been his most productive winter as a writer. By early 1932 he was entering a period of depression which lasted intermittently for almost a decade, but he maintained his working routine throughout. He also suffered from severe bronchial problems, with his condition so serious that in early 1933 he was given the Last Sacraments. These years saw his work on *Time in a Red Coat*, a novel which Brown called "more a sombre fable", a meditation on the passage of time. It has been described as "a novel in which the poet" — Brown as poet — "assumes an undoubted authority". She died in 1934. The other, who died the next year, was Stella Cartwright. It was in the period after her death that Brown began *For the Islands I Sing*, the autobiography which was not published until after his death. It devotes more space to Stella than to any other individual, although he did not attend her funeral. Brown subsequently formed an intense, platonic, attachment to Kenna Crawford, to whom he dedicated both *The Golden Bird: Two Orkney Stories* and some poems in *The Wreck of the Archangel*, a volume of poetry. She bore a remarkable resemblance to Stella Cartwright. Between 1934 and 1935 Brown travelled to Nairn, including a visit to Pluscarden Abbey, and to Shetland and Oxford, the most that he left Orkney apart from his earlier studies in Edinburgh. The Oxford visit coincided with the centenary of the death of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Shortly afterwards Brown was diagnosed with bowel cancer, which required two major operations during 1935, and a lengthy stay in Foresterhill Hospital, Aberdeen. *Beside the Ocean of Time* covers over eight hundred years of Orkney history through the dreams of an Orkney schoolboy. It is a meditation on the nature of time. But this Booker listing caused him acute anxiety. Brown continued working, writing the poems of *Following a Lark*, and preparing the book for publication. The first copies were delivered to his home on the day that he died. He died on 13 April after a short illness and was buried on 16 April, the feast day of Saint Magnus, with his funeral service held at the Church of Scotland St Magnus Cathedral. The service was presided over by Rev. Peter Maxwell Davies played *Farewell to Stromness*. Carve the runes Then be content with silence. It is engraved with a quotation from his best-known poem, "Hamnavoe":

**Chapter 6 : BBC Two - Writing Scotland - George MacKay Brown**

*George Mackay Brown () was born in the remote Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland and apart from two periods of education at Newbattle Abbey College and the University of Edinburgh, he lived there all his life.*

The first is a fine collection of short stories, the second, a collection of poems. I shall come to that encounter presently. Of course, an author is accessible to his public through his books. He is a prolific writer, of plays, novels, poems, essays, and stories for children. He has not published an autobiography; in a sense this is unnecessary since the world may meet and know him through a few lines of poetry or a simple story. But biographical details add insight, and most readers are keenly interested in the nuts and bolts that maketh the man. George Mackay Brown was born in , in Stromness, a seaside town in Orkney, the youngest of six children. His mother, a Gaelic speaker, came from Sutherland; his father, a tailor turned postman, was a native of Stromness. He was a fervent supporter of Glasgow Celtic and thought of a career as a football writer. Ill health meant long weeks in bed at home, reading. In he became a Catholic. This was a gradual rather than a sudden conversion. My own writing would be much poorer, lacking those treasures of symbol and image. He is a godly writer: I suppose that Magnus London, is the most overtly Catholic of his novels. The book concerns the Saint, slain at Egilsay, and contains a wonderfully moving description of the Mass. Magnus is an heroic tale. It opens, shockingly, with a peasant harnessing his wife to a plough because he has no beast. The history of Magnus is found in *The Orkney-inga Saga*, a book that had a profound influence on Brown. Actually, many of his stories and poems are set in the distant past. Is it because the author has lived all his life in a virtually unchanged land and seascape that he is able to recreate the past and people it so convincingly? He excels at stripping off the superficial to expose the bone and soul of a man. He begins inside " then tells a very good story in splendid prose, or glorious poetry in words that are often rich and strange to the modern ear. Words like *hirple*, *selkie*. Such words can sound pseudo if the author lacks total command of his backcloth or character. We who live and work in the modern state of perpetuum mobile are unlikely to possess that command and intimate knowledge. Light and shade, day and night, sun and storm, are the natural weave against which children shuttle to school, the Lamma Fair entralls an entire community, fishermen cast their nets, and crofters work the soil. Leather, horn, stone and wood recur rhythmically; the author persuasively presents these natural and ordinary things until we see them afresh. The same is true of the reader, forced to re-appraise familiar words and to absorb the subtle, unpretentious use of new ones. And climate becomes almost a character in its own right " no one lying on a sun-drenched tropical beach could have written so incisively of raging tempests, huge and hungry seas, enormous skies where the zephyr breeze seems to be a rarity. It is often a raw and angry scene, clearly wrought in the latitudes peculiar to Orkney. I referred at the beginning to the rare privilege I had in meeting George Mackay Brown. I used the word rare deliberately, first, because he is a very shy man, a true recluse, and thus, the chances of meeting him are scarce; second, the occasion was rare in the sense of precious because he, of all living writers, is the one I would most wish to write like. It is unlikely that I shall ever meet him again. This seems an appropriate moment to put that meeting on record. It is a glimpse that may not be without interest in a future where dust has returned to dust. He had been persuaded to come south by his friend and editor at John Murray, Hugo Brunner, and it was at the invitation of Hugo and his wife Mary Rose that I met him. It was hot " hotter even, because so unexpected in England. Picture an Oxford garden with vivid green lawn, neat hedges, herbaceous border, thick with flowers and trundling bees, a birthday-card garden. Next door children played, their thin screams sometimes interrupted by the lazy bark of an overheated dog. Into this English idyll, it seemed, an alien had wandered. He is a thin, spare, boney man, with a quietness that is disconcerting. He is a man harrowed, not hewn. By harrowed I mean not agonised, or tortured, but as if turned up out of the ground. He is as natural as the people and the things that he writes about. All my carefully prepared questions fly out of my mind; they seem impertinent or trivial. It is restful being with him, for he is a man of great strength, a concealed strength forged by a knowledge of weakness. Kind, gentle, humorous " he is all these things.

**Chapter 7 : George Mackay Brown – A bibliographical study of a twentieth-century Orkney writer**

*George Mackay Brown, the poet, novelist and dramatist, spent his life living in and documenting the Orkney Isles. A bout of severe measles at the age of 12 became the basis for recurring health problems throughout his life. Uncertain as to his future, he remained in education until , a year which brought wi.*

The experience of writing an article about Stromness. Breakfast television; breakfast and going to school a half century ago. Staying at home on a stormy winter afternoon. Some thoughts on flowers – about which he claims he knows nothing. What he does on Thursdays: He acquired his first refrigerator two years, but now it is no longer functioning. A cold, stormy spring; thoughts about the death of St. Some eminent ministers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Orkney, including Rev. William Clouston and Rev. Claims made on television and in magazines that certain foods are bad for you. Watching football on television. Remembering how exciting local political campaigns once were. What it was like a century ago when whales were spotted near Stromness. A fictional account of how peat fires were discovered in prehistoric times. The unpredictability of Orkney weather. The occasional loss of a column in the clutter of his house. A description of how Gypsy the cat arrived at Mayburn Court. Putting out the trash on Monday morning. Watching a performance at the Arts Theatre in Kirkwall by a group of singers and dancers from the Philippines. A drive to Merkister and Warbeth beach. Taking the ferry to Hoy. Furer, a visitor from Switzerland, who worries about the death of languages. Visits from Michael Krauskopf, a lecturer in German at St. Braal, in Strathy, where his mother came from. The major literary prizes are meaningless. Changes in eating and sleeping habits. A visit from Gypsy the cat. Memories of the daily newspapers of the past. The legend that Annie Caird, thought to be an Orkney witch, caused the tidal wave of Reading a book about the Crusades. Various activities before Christmas. The problems of writing a short story. Sending out Christmas cards. The pleasure of eating a pair of kippers. The pleasures of reading during a loss of electricity. For everybody, it seems, has his own private quartering of the year and they nearly all differ markedly from the official dates. Vanished figures from the streets of Stromness. A visit from Ros Rinkwater; what life would be like on Orkney after a future nuclear disaster. The problem of overflowing bookshelves. Tells the story of Sweyn Asleifson on Gairsay. Reading the short stories of Solzhenitsyn. New bookshelves in his living room mean that he must get rid of the contents of his sideboard. His experiences in trying to care for flowers and plants. The pleasures of public benches in Stromness. The disappearance of Latin in the schools. Remembering when Prince George the future Duke of Kent visited Stromness in the late s to launch a new lifeboat. What he had assumed to be fog turns out to be smoke from a moorland fire. Discusses other Poet Laureates. The masked fisherman in the Orkneyinga Saga. Recollections of the Marques, which has sunk near Bermuda. Magnus Festival; heavy fog. A morning of literary work followed by a drive around the vicinity of Stromness with friends. A week in Rackwick. Warbeth beach when he was a child. A story possibly not true about one of the north isles of Orkney during World War One. The menace of cars, trucks, and motor-bikes on the main street of Stromness. Stromness putting greens through the years. How eating tastes on Orkney have changed. Comments on a recent radio program about Edwin and Willa Muir. Why there is more flooding in Stromness now. The south end of Stromness was once a livelier place. A stormy day suggests the onset of winter. What meals were once like in Orkney. The failure of his television set prompts some thoughts about the role of television in modern life. The coal strike; starting fires in his home. The difficulties of sending out Christmas cards. Drowsiness during the daytime as a sign of old age. His experiences in using the telephone. Christmas and Santa Claus during his early years. Thoughts about Orwell during

**Chapter 8 : George Mackay Brown (Author of Beside the Ocean of Time)**

*George Mackay Brown was born in , in Stromness, a seaside town in Orkney, the youngest of six children. His mother, a Gaelic speaker, came from Sutherland; his father, a tailor turned postman, was a native of Stromness.*

Chapter 9 : George MacKay - IMDb

*George Mackay Brown, or GMB as he was known in Orkney A sense of place at the heart of George Mackay Brown's work brings many visitors to Orkney every year. His work was inspired by Orcadian folklore - the myths, legends and sagas - Orkney's Norse heritage, the natural landscape, his childhood and exploration of his faith.*