



PLEASE RETURN TO  
WAL (0407 86 9696)  
AT VFMC

# TURLOUGH

a novel

# BRIAN KEENAN

author of *An Evil Cradling*

While held hostage by fundamentalist Shi'ite militiamen in the suburbs of Beirut, Brian Keenan was visited and sustained by the presence of Turlough O'Carolan – the legendary blind Irish harper of the seventeenth century. This novel is thus a re-creation of an extraordinary historical story and a personal debt repaid. It is also, obliquely, a parallel life – another life imprisoned, shaped by the dark.

Narrated largely by O'Carolan from his deathbed, and through the recollections of those closest to him, *Turlough* powerfully brings to life a lost Ireland of famine and disease, eviction and oppression. Stalking through the broken and dispossessed comes Turlough O'Carolan, the musical prodigy, blinded by smallpox and now an itinerant harper, lauded by the aristocracy and a hero to his people. His Rabelaisian desire for drink and women is counterpointed by his artistic struggle towards the great music and some kind of inner peace. Driven by demons and dreams, riven by contradictions, Turlough emerges as a great man, full of frailty: a blind man afraid of the dark.

A panoramic picaresque, rich with the textures and smells of rural Ireland and peopled by a host of angels and devils, *Turlough* is a remarkable historical journey, and a huge imaginative feat.

### praise for *An Evil Cradling*

'Unforgettable...a remarkable achievement.'

John Simpson

'The scope and grandeur of his reflections is supported by the concrete detail of his narrative. It is a moving and remarkable triumph.'

Sebastian Faulks, *Independent on Sunday*

'Scriptural in its resonances and its broad artistry, while being as gripping as an airport thriller.'

James Saynor, *Observer*

'From this horror has come something wonderful. *An Evil Cradling* is a great book...a mighty achievement by a magnificent writer.'

Frank McGuinness, *Irish Times*



ISBN 0-224-06122-4



9 780224 061223