

## The Cure at Troy

*by the same author*

*poetry*

DEATH OF A NATURALIST  
DOOR INTO THE DARK  
WINTERING OUT  
NORTH  
FIELD WORK  
SELECTED POEMS 1965-75  
STATION ISLAND  
SWEENEY ASTRAY  
THE HAW LANTERN  
THE RATTLE BAG (EDITED WITH TED HUGHES)  
NEW SELECTED POEMS 1966-1987

*prose*

PREOCCUPATIONS: SELECTED PROSE 1968-1978  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE

SEAMUS  
HEANEY

The Cure at Troy

*A Version of  
Sophocles' Philoctetes*

Field Day

First published in 1990  
by Field Day, Foyle Arts Centre,  
Lawrence Hill, Derry BT48 7NJ

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and applications to perform it must be made in the first  
instance, before rehearsals begin, to Field Day.

A CIP record for this book  
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In memory of Robert Fitzgerald  
poet and translator  
1910-1985

'O look, look in the mirror,  
O look in your distress;  
Life remains a blessing  
Although you cannot bless.

O stand, stand at the window  
As the tears scald and start;  
You shall love your crooked neighbour  
With your crooked heart.'

W. H. Auden

## CHARACTERS

ODYSSEUS

NEOPTOLEMUS

PHILOCTETES

CHORUS

Attendants to Neoptolemus, at least three:

CHORUS LEADER

SENTRY

MERCHANT (in disguise)

HERCULES (in person of chorus leader)

*The Cure at Troy* was first performed at the Guildhall, Derry, on 1 October 1990. The cast included:

ODYSSEUS

Seamus Moran

NEOPTOLEMUS

Sean Rocks

PHILOCTETES

Desmond Cave

CHORUS LEADER

Veronica Duffy

SENTRY

Siobhan Miley

*Directors*

Stephen Rea and Bob Crowley

*Designer*

Bob Crowley

*Lighting designer*

Rory Dempster

*A sea shore. Spacious fetch of sea-light. Upstage right (from audience's point of view) rocks piled, cliff-face, grass tufts, stunted bushes. A cave mouth/archway visible up there, with small acting area at that level. A sort of strewn pathway, coming downstage, forking towards acting area. Access to cave mouth possible from this point. Access to second entrance of cave is offstage, right. If a volcano can be suggested in background, all the better but it should not be overemphasized.*

*CHORUS discovered, boulder-still, wrapped in shawls. All three in series stir and move, as it were seabirds stretching and unstiffening. The prologue can be divided between the three voices. By the end of the prologue, CHORUS LEADER has positioned herself where she will speak as HERCULES at the end of the play.*

CHORUS

Philoctetes.

Hercules.

Odysseus.

Heroes. Victims. Gods and human beings.

All throwing shapes, every one of them

Convinced he's in the right, all of them glad

To repeat themselves and their every last mistake,

No matter what.

People so deep into

Their own self-pity self-pity buoys them up.

People so staunch and true, they're fixated,

Shining with self-regard like polished stones.