

DOUGLAS DUNN'S POETRY

Professor Douglas Dunn retired recently from the University of St Andrews School of English, where he has taught since being made a professor in 1991. Recognised as one of the most accomplished poets of his generation, Douglas Dunn has published eleven collections of poetry and two collections of selected poems, as well as two books of short stories, plays for radio and television, and a translation of Racine's *Andromaque*. An eminent critic and editor, his publications include editions of Byron's and Browning's verse, a book about his mentor and friend, Philip Larkin, as well as *Two Decades of Irish writing*, *The Poetry of Scotland*, *New Poets from Hull*, and the *Faber Book of 20th-century Scottish Poetry*. Made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 1981, his first collection of poetry, *Terry Street*, brought him a Scottish Arts Council Award and a Somerset Maugham Award; *St Kilda's Parliament* won the Hawthornden Prize; his acclaimed *Elegies*, written after the death of his first wife, Lesley Balfour Wallace, was the Whitbread Book of the Year; *The Year's Afternoon* was shortlisted for the Forward Prize, and Douglas was awarded an OBE for services to literature in 2003.

A supreme metricist—in John Fuller's words, the 'master of English prosody'— Douglas Dunn is widely acknowledged as one of the finest lyric poets of his generation. Politically left of centre—he wrote a fine and influential pamphlet criticising the imposition of the poll tax in the late 1980s—his poetry combines a fierce sense of justice while chronicling the pain and joy of the human condition. The poet Sean O'Brien, a friend from his days at Hull, has written that there is in his work a "permanent stand-off between private life and political engagement, a state of affairs that has become a strategic necessity for his poetry". As a teacher, Douglas' approach combines generosity with rigour, and he has been the acknowledged role model and mentor for many creative writing students who have since gone on to become published and respected poets and novelists. Douglas has admitted how much he will miss his students, and it is easy to conjecture how much they will miss him.

ANNA CROWE
Trustee & co-founder, StAnza