

## **Christy Brown – Writer / Painter**



Acclaimed Irish painter and writer Christy Brown is perhaps one of the finest examples of how unrestrained human spirit can break all shackles of physical limitations to achieve unfathomed heights. Inflicted with cerebral palsy since birth, Brown had no muscular control over his entire body, but the toes of his left foot. Yet, undeterred by his condition, Brown went on to produce hundreds of paintings alongwith writing over a thousand letters, a classic memoir, four novels and four

books of poetry – all with the toes of his left foot!

Born in 1932 as the 10<sup>th</sup> out of the 22 children to an impoverished Dublin bricklayer and his wife, Brown was helped by his doting mother and social worker Katriona Delahu to not only to hold a paintbrush, work on a typewriter but also to speak only intelligibly and articulately.

Despite having no formal school education, Christy Brown attended St Brendan's School-Clinic in Sandymount intermittently where he met Dr. Robert Collis, who was quick to identify Brown as a natural story teller. Dr. Collis encouraged Brown to write novels and later helped him to publish his autobiography 'My Left Foot' which went on to become a literary sensation and was made into a 1989 Academy Award-winning film of the same name, starring Daniel Day-Lewis as Brown. Brown's other novel 'Down All The Days', published in 1970, also went on to become a bestseller and was translated into fourteen languages. Brown also published four poetry collections. Apart from writing novels, Brown was also an avid painter. Some of the most well-known paintings by him are 'Garage in the Snow', 'Sailboats on a River', and 'Boats in the Harbour'.

Brown died on September 7, 1981, at the age of 49. His work and his life continue to inspire people all over the world. As a young man with disability, he faced and overcame huge barriers in his quest to become what his 16-year-old self imagined he would be – a very successful painter and writer. In addition to producing ground-breaking literature, he was a testament to what humans are capable of in the face of adversity.