



Stephen Gill, The Pillar

Páginas: 224
Idioma: Inglés
Editorial: Nobody Books
Año de edición: 2019

A pillar knocked into the ground next to a stream in a flat, open landscape, trees and houses visible in the distance, beneath a vast sky.

That is the backdrop to all of Stephen Gill's photographs in this book. We see the same landscape in spring and summer, in autumn and winter, we see it in sunshine and rain, in snow and wind. Yet there is not the slightest monotony about these pictures, for in almost every one there is a bird, and each of these birds opens up a unique moment in time. We see something that has never happened before and will never happen again. That it takes place in the midst of a landscape characterised by repetition, in which time is cyclical, sets up a keen existential dynamic: on the one hand, everything has happened before, there's nothing new under the sun; on the other, every moment is unique and carries the hallmark of the miracle: what happens happens only once and never again.

But this wasn't what I thought about the first time I looked at these photographs. In fact, I barely thought at all, for I was shaken, as a person so often is when confronted with an extraordinary work of art. I'd never seen birds in this way before, as if on their own terms, as independent creatures with independent lives. Ancient, forever improvising, endlessly embroiled with the forces of nature, and yet indulging too. And so infinitely alien to us.



