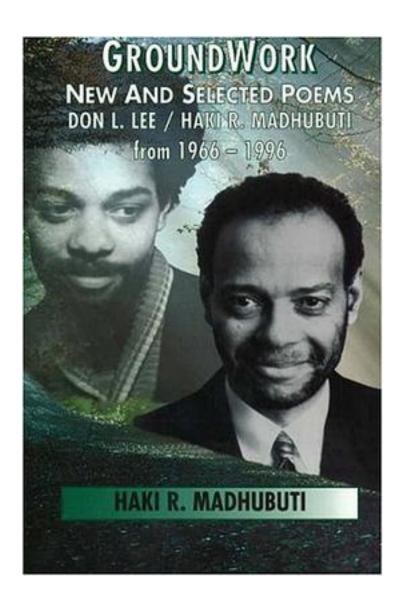
## Groundwork



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出版者:

出版时间:1998-4

装帧:

isbn:9780856406089

The past -- our own, our family's, our country's -- is deeply implanted within us all. Nowhere is this more true than in Ireland, and in his latest novel, Robert Welch calls up voices bearing witness to some of Ireland's key historic events that continue to distort and disturb the Irish psyche. Focusing on the province of Munster, in southern Ireland, and panning back and forth over some four hundred years, from 1586 to 1956, Welch chronicles the family histories of the Condons, Herberts, Holmes, and the O'Dwyers. He focuses in on periods of great national disruption -- the Elizabethean conquest, the Famine, emigration, the struggle for Irish independence. And he lets his characters speak in their own words, to tell us how they and their families fared through these events. And so we hear from the Condons, from Con, the gardener and Cistercian monk and from Patsy, originally a farmer in 19th century Cork, later the owner of a music shop in New York; and from the Holmes, Elliott and Morgan, the merchant wholesalers; as well as the O'Dwyers, the Herberts, and the 17th-century Gaelic scholar, Geoffrey Keating, Lodowick Riche, the Elizabethan planter, and Fergal O'Dowd, Fenian in New York and trade union organizer.

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