

Book Review

Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, 39 (2022).
doi:[10.1017/ipm.2019.42](https://doi.org/10.1017/ipm.2019.42)

'*The Doctor Who Sat for a Year*' by Brendan Kelly (ISBN 9780717184576). Gill Books, Dublin. 2019.

'*The Doctor Who Sat for a Year*' is Professor Brendan Kelly's 12th book. His most recent books 'Hearing Voices: The History of Psychiatry in Ireland' and 'Dignity, Mental Health and Human Rights: Coercion and the Law' were well received internationally and likely to be core reference texts in their respective areas.

'*The Doctor Who Sat for a Year*' is very different. It is written in the form of journal entries through a year of the author attempting to meditate on a daily basis. The entries make easy reading. They fuel introspection. They are in many parts humorous. The reader, while treated to a rare insight into one of the greatest minds in contemporary Irish medicine also becomes familiar with the author's cat Trixie and an evolving addiction to cake.

The author writes this book while describing himself as a 'recidivist meditator' and 'self-confessed Zen Failure'. This self-deprecation is humbling. The content is deep, inspired by Buddhist tradition and full of lessons for the mindful reader. The book is divided across

the 12 months of the year with each month having a theme from each of the 'Four Noble Truths' or 'The Noble Eightfold Path'. There is advice on 'How to Meditate' included for the beginner.

The book can be read in one sitting and this is what I did. However, it was in the context of subsequently reading the *Dhammapada*, a collection of Buddhist teachings from the third century BC that the depth of the message in the book became clear and I returned to listen to the audiobook of 'The Doctor Who Sat for a Year' during a lengthy commute to further appreciate its core message.

The ideas conveyed in the book are relevant to each of us in our daily lives. Reading it will likely inspire many to meditate and many others to embrace their imperfections. It is with this in mind I would recommend the book both to the 'Zen Novices' and 'Zen Masters' among the readers of the *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*.

Conflict of Interest

GG has previously co-authored scientific papers with the author of the reviewed book. There are no other conflicts of interest to declare.

GAUTAM GULATI
University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland
(Email: gautam.gulati@hse.ie)