



# ***The Once and Future Celt: A Memoir*** by Bill Watkins

**Published by Scarletta Press**

**Reviewed by Beth Cummings**

This book is the final book in a trilogy of memoirs that Bill Watkins has written about his youth and coming of age as a Celt. The whimsy in a title that refers back to "The Once and Future King," King Arthur, is an indication of the intellectual humor that permeates the books.

Watkins himself was born in Birmingham, England of an Irish mother and a Welsh father. Both parents were storytellers as well as speakers of their native languages. Watkins learned a lot of both as a child and then continued on in a search for self that would make him a Druid or wise man. This particular book begins with Watkins sustaining a severe cut on his foot that is tended to and healed with the aid of a Gypsy (Romany) shuvani healer and her niece, Riena. As he is healing, he stays with the Gypsy caravan and finds himself discovering many connections between the Romany traditions and those of the ancient Celts.

This is an intriguing book. Bill Watkins gathers and shares knowledge of poetry, folk tales, folk music, and folk wisdom that he has gathered while traveling throughout Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and England and with the British merchant marines. He intersperses poetry, song, philosophy and lots of humor with wonderful descriptions of the people he meets as he rambles about, returns home and then moves on again. As he finds out more about Celtic traditions he also finds out more about himself and how he might fit into the present day world. He is driven in part by the request of his father to work to keep the Celtic traditions from being lost. Part of his quest is to find ways to fulfill that mission.

It's a book that perhaps not everyone would enjoy, but I liked it a lot. I'm now interested in reading his earlier books too.

Armchair Interviews says: Most interesting, especially if this region of the world interests you.

