

Annemarie Ní Churreáin

Souvenir, 1985

Written in response to **Pilvi Takala**, *The Stroker*

Annemarie Ní Churreáin is a poet from northwest Donegal. Her debut collection *Bloodroot* (Doire Press, 2017) was shortlisted for the Shine Strong Award for best first collection in Ireland and for the 2018 Julie Suk Award in the USA. She is the author of a suite of poems about Dublin titled *Town* (The Salvage Press, 2018).

In 2016 Ní Churreáin was the recipient of an Arts Council Next Generation Artist Award. She was the 2017-18 County Kerry Writer in Residence and the recipient of the inaugural 2018 John Broderick Residency Award. Ní Churreáin has been awarded literary fellowships from Akademie Schloss Solitude, Germany, Jack Kerouac House, Orlando and Hawthornden Castle, Scotland.

The **Temple Bar Gallery + Studios Writing Commission** aims to expand ideas around writing about art by inviting Irish authors to create a series of pieces inspired by the exhibitions at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios. In 2019, TBG+S has commissioned Annemarie Ní Churreáin to make a piece of writing inspired by each of the exhibitions in the gallery programme.

Previous TBG+S Writers include Sara Baume (2015), Claire-Louise Bennett (2016), Gavin Corbett (2017), and Doireann Ní Ghríofa (2018).

The texts are available to download from www.templebargallery.com and printed copies are available in the gallery.

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In Lawlor's Orchard apples not yet wept from the branch
begin to rot,
skins hail-bruised, cores rusted by the storm.

Out of the cursed skies, crows fall
dumb as severed tongues,
towerless in the afterland of thunder and bolts.

All over Ireland,
Virgin statues shake. Strike workers chant:
you buy fruit and diamonds, they hang sons.

It is a year of sorrowful touching, of wild horses
entering young streams, and under no name
leaving only *dust, dust, dust.*

Off the hungry northwest coast, a small boat
shivers out towards an island,
like a loosened pearl, or a piece of bone,

or the found scraps of an animal
transfiguring
the palms of the ocean.

What souvenirs itself into the body is the world
glimpsed through a torn fern,
the smooth mourning of a stone for stone,
the handicraft of desire.

*Hold me. With my consent, know
the country I am from.*