

Annemarie Ní Churreáin

After Bridget

Written in response to **Aileen Murphy**, *PANTING*

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.

Temple Bar Gallery + Studios is supported by:



After Bridget

–Are you a witch? / Are you a fairy? / Are you the wife of Michael Cleary?

Long before the forced-feed of herbs and milk
the burning begins,
one syllable at a time.

The Cheek. The Lip. The Gall. The Nerve.

There is the warning heat of an eye,
an exposed palm, a tongue raised to the roof in refusal.
No speaking out of turn. No crossing Lines. No overstepping of The Mark.

Headstrong. Feisty. Brattish. Fierce.

She who knows great thirst hee-haws the loudest.

She who wears a collar of petals around her neck is invisible.

She who lies quite still in the dark dreams mostly of fire

and of all that wet thread through a needle's eye,
all that craft-work as the Boys knock ball upon a sill,
all that sun rushing in like horses,
all that horse-light against glass.

knock knock knock

stitch stitch stitch

No poppy bruises. No welts. No bone like moon shattering upon rock.
Here is the song: *bitchwhorewagonwitchslutrampslapperCunt.*

You better watch Yourself. You better watch Your step.

White coats, Bad Men, Faeries, Shelves

You could be taken away.

You could be left behind.

Oh my Keepers,
perhaps the Stake will be Dead easy, Dead soft, Dead quick,
a heart-beat footstep on the short-cut route,
a flame caught up inside the breast,
like a lake inside a bird,
like a white animal disappearing...