

WRITING COMMISSION

**Annemarie Ní Churreáin**  
*Ode To My Father*  
*for Ronan McCrea*

TEMPLE BAR  
GALLERY +  
STUDIOS

**TBG+S Writing Commission**

The TBG+S 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 write a piece of short fiction or a poem 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](http://www.templebargallery.com) and printed copies are available in the gallery.

**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.

i

On this flagstone table, I serve you a morsel of red meat  
softened by my own lips.

In your hands, I place my palms upturned  
and against all machinery

I repeat

*I am a thorn, I am a thorn.*

Ritual, do not abandon me.

Grant me instead

a hazel seed,

a raven's eye,

the dark nerve-light of imbas\*

ii

Seven decades deep and still the season burns.

I cross down over the border into a country known as 'free'.

*Take my hair, take my clothes, take my name.*

Here is a reel of weeping women.

Here is an image of a breast without child.

Here is a paper

like a wing

fluttering out of a mouth and meaning

*I will not dream the body as a prophecy.*

*I will not dream the body.*

*I will not dream.*

iii

Father, I have glimpsed the end of narrative, the bone closed up into a bud,  
cells refurled

and grief

untangled from the earth. In the way of roots,

*the record is no longer available to view. The record no longer exists.*

Out of loss, begins new language.

*I am full when I do not breathe. I am dying when I speak.*

In your breath, I place my breath

and as a consequence,

I give you my word.

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In Old Irish imbas means 'great knowledge', often relating to foreknowledge obtained by magical or occult means. Practitioners of imbas forosnai engaged in sensory deprivation techniques to enter a ritualistic trance and receive prophecy.