

WRITING COMMISSION

Annemarie Ní Churreáin

Son, Brother, Kin
for staring forms

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 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.

Son, Brother, Kin

A Guide for Carers of The State

First, there is a threshold that must be crossed.

It is a slim crossing, papery to the touch.
Yet you must brace yourself for the world
made wing by one thread of water across one page of earth.

In the anti-room of family, *foster* is a word
owed to journey, root-song, loss.

Next, press this long-sleeved shirt against your skin,
the ironed seams, the moon-scarred cuffs.

It is an act of faith to hold close a worn-out thing.
It is a sign of home
to repeat more than *ward of court*, more than *dream*,
son, brother, kin.

Behind the sliding walls, a deep-cut sill will help you frame
history in wait of seed.
But do not assume

a mussed-up teenage bed,
a disembodied swirl of clothes,
the aftertang of scent unbottled on the premise of adventure,

Instead, expect

a fluorescent bulb,
the metal stairwell of an inturned river running back towards the source,
a stray shoe, clueless.

It is a slim crossing, unknown as a feather to a map.
You may learn by heart the careful cloth-light of a wound or how to still the darkest tongues.
Yet you must brace yourself
for the possibility
inside the last of all rooms
of a boy found lost
in a too-bright sleep,
streaming ribbons, clear crescents taped to his chest,
a hand on linen
scattered
open
like torn lily petals
asking snow
what if?

This poem was written in response to the group exhibition *staring forms* with works by Miranda Blennerhassett, Aleana Egan, Andreas Kindler von Knobloch, Tanad Williams.