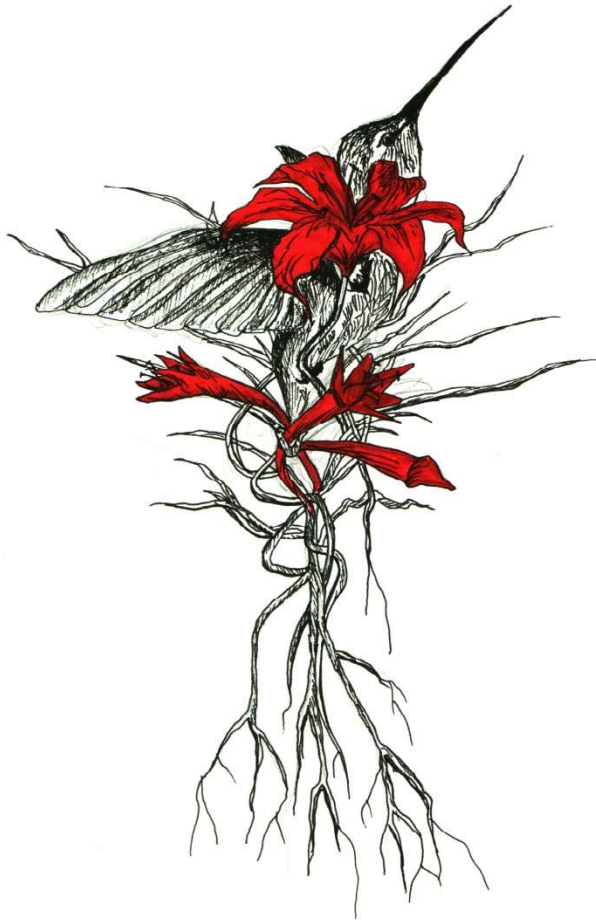


**Dordéan, do Chroí
A Hummingbird, your Heart**

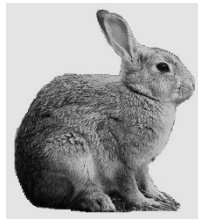
Doireann Ní Ghríofa



Smithereens Press

Dordéan, do Chroí
A Hummingbird, your Heart

Doireann Ní Ghríofa



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Dordéan, do Chroí ! A Hummingbird, your
Heart

Dordéan, do Chroí

Stánaimid isteach sa bhosca plaisteach,
áit a gcodlaíonn tú i nead achrannach
de shreangacha snaidhmthe.
Cosnaíonn cliabhán cuarach na gcnámh
an dordéan bídeach atá ar foluain ionat,
a shúile séadghlasa ar crith faoi do chraiceann.
Cuireann a sciatháin gaoth faoi do chuisle
agus coinníonn macallaí na meaisíní
ag feadaíl thall is anall, mar a thiteann
an solas ón lá go mall. Taobh amuigh,
bagraíonn crainn loma a ngéaga,
ag sméideadh saoirse chugat.
An bhfanfaidh do dordéan linn, a leanbh bán,
nó an éireoidh sé i dtreo saoirse na scamall-lán?

A Hummingbird, your Heart

We peer into a plastic box,
where you sleep in a tangled nest of wires.
A curved cage of bone shelters
the hummingbird heart that hovers within,
his jade green eyes darting under your skin.
All though the darkening day, wings flicker
a pulse that keeps the huddled machines alive,
echoing whistles back and forth
in a chirping bird-tongue that only nurses understand.
Outside, winter trees hold bare branches high,
beckoning to the fragile bird that holds you with us.
Will your hummingbird – so vivid, so slight –
seek the freedom of skies, and take flight?

Fáinleoga

Bhain na bioráin binneas ceoil ón gciúnas.
Thuirling greameanna ar nós fáinleog
i scuaine ar shreang
ag fáinne an lae, ag faire
ar shnáth cniotála á sníomh
ina ghúinín gleoite
de chrócbhuí chrithre
gan laige, gan lúb ar lár,
déanta di siúd
a d'imigh
i gcaoch na súl.

Sínte spréite i m'aonar
i bhfuacht an ospidéal
cuimlím míne, gile an ghúna olla
le fuacht mo leicinn
scaoilim leis an tsnaidhm
ligim le

lúb
ar
lúb

Snáithe silte -
fáinleoga dóchais
ag titim as radharc
le luí na gréine.

Líonann mo léan
an ceirtlín olla
i mo lámh:
lúbtha,
liath,
lán.

Swallows

The knitting needles drew a melody from silence
as stitches followed one another
like swallows landing on a wire,
watching a small dress of softest yellow wool
grow like a sunrise
waiting for she who waited within.
She, who came
and left
all too soon.

Stretched and stitched,
I lie empty, raw, alone
in the cold corridor of the hospital,
the grey knot of my mind
unravelling.
I hold the woollen dress to my cheek,
then unravel the stitches

one
by
one

swallows of hope
disappearing at sunset
to some unfathomable,
faraway land.

My grief grows like wound wool.
Dull.
Full.

Corda

Gorm, do shúile
Gorm, do bheola
Gorm, do mhéara
Gorm, do bharraicíní
Gorm
Gorm
Gorm.
Ghearr an dochtúir an corda imleacáin.
Ar oscailt mo shúl dom
bhí tú imithe, do chorp caite sa chré
i bpoll dorcha éigin.

Athcheangail an corda,
cúlaigh aníos chugam.

Le lámh i ndiaidh láimhe
tarraingím siar chugam tú
isteach ionam arís.
Diaidh ar ndiaidh –
matán le matán,
cnámh le cnámh,
fuil le fuil –
athshúim thú.

Ceanglaím an corda
timpeall ar mo chroí –
nasc nach scaoilfear choíche.
Dofheicthe. Doroinnte.

Cord

Blue, your eyes
Blue, your lips
Blue, your fingers
Blue, your toes
Blue
Blue
Blue.
The doctor cut the umbilical cord.
When I opened my eyes, you were gone,
your body thrown into some dark hollow.

Connect the cord,
come back to me.

With handfuls and armfuls of cord,
I draw you back
and reabsorb you
limb by limb –
muscle into muscle
bone into bone
blood into blood.

I wrap that cord tightly,
knot it around my heart –
a bond that will never be broken.
Invisible. Indivisible.

Sólás

I gceo gealaí meán oíche
le ceol cailte, filleann sí ó chríocha ciana.

Aithním do bhall broinne,
a cheolaire cíbe.
Is fada liom go bhfillfidh tú arís chugam.

*Creideadh tráth gur fhill anam na marbhghinte mar cheolaire cíbe,
chun suaimhneas a thabhairt dá máithreacha lena gceol.*

Solace

Under midnight's moonlit mist,
she returns from distant lands.

I recognise your birthmark,
small warbler.
I long for you to return to me.

*In Irish folklore, sedge warblers heard singing at midnight were said to
be voices of stillborn infants who had returned to soothe their mothers.*

Corr Éisc

Tá mo chorp cleitithe agam
le síoda-liath na cumha
is anois, seasaim i sruth an tsaoil
cos-caol, ceann-maol
le m'aghaidh in airde
go deoranta.
I lár-luas na h-abhann,
sleamhnaíonn suaimhneas
na ciúnas chugam.

Heron

I feathered myself in silver silks,
the shining plumage of loneliness.
I stand still in shallow streams –
slender-legged, sleek-headed.
Here, I hold my head high,
aloft, aloof.
In the rushing gush
of the river, a quiet calm
swims toward me.

Sreang Sínte

Poncaíonn cuailí bealach an bhóthair
crainn mharbha, nocta agus sáite ar ais sa chré.
Síneann sreanga eatarthu, léaslínte úra
os ár gcionn. Amhail fréamhacha,
tá a nglór plúchta, ainneoin gaoth gharbh
ag tarraingt téada na cláirsí ciúnaithe.
Le luí na gréine, bailíonn druideanna ann
ag caint is ag cásamh a ngéaga goidte
nach n-iompróidh nead ná ualach
na beatha nua riamh arís.

Telephone Wire

Poles punctuate the road –
dead trees, stripped bare
and pushed back into the soil,
they grip taut lines, new horizons
that hover over our heads.
They stand – mute as roots –
as wind plucks the wires
of this lonely lyre.
At sunset, starlings gather here
and chatter condolences
to these trees, whose lost limbs
will hold nests of new life
never again.

Línte do Frida Kahlo

"She lived dying" – Andrés Henestrosa, 1925

Idir bás agus beatha
luíonn Frida ina leaba,
malaí mealltacha mar éin allta
a scaipeann sciatháin scáthacha
sa spéir thar a súile.

Lines for Frida Kahlo

"She lived dying" – Andrés Henestrosa, 1925

Between life and death,
Frida lies in her sickbed,
her brows are wild birds
spreading shadowed wings
in the sky above her eye.

Crann

Idir dall is dorcha, lasann loinnir na gréine
mo ghúna órga.
Teanntáíonn teannóga coirt mo choirp.
Sa smearsholas, suíonn smólaigh
ina neadacha – síolta mo smaointe.
Éiríonn is eitlíonn siad uaim, mo chuid smaointe
scaoilte, scaipthe sna scamail.
Maisím mé féin le réalta reatha
idir ghéaga garbha. Sáim mo chuid fréamhacha
i gcré na hoíche, súim súilíní drúchta.
Sínim i dtreo an dorchadais:
mo ghrá geal, a phóg fhuar
ina síoda i ngach pholl folaithe.

Tree

At sunset, see my gown
of bark burn golden,
tightened by tendrils of ivy.
Hear birds nestle in my nests,
their flight, my thoughts made motion.
I sink my toes into soft night soil,
sip dew drops, and
adorn myself with shooting stars
that glister in tangled twigs.
I stretch toward the dark,
my lost lover –
his cold embrace
creeps into every crevice.

Macalla Mara

Maidin dhorcha Samhna
i dtigh mo sheanmháthar
chrom creatlacha crainn chugainn,
ag bualadh fuinneoige, ag bagairt orainn
le géaga garbha.
Shuigh mé cois tine,
fillte i mbaclainn m'athar,
móin ar dearg-lonrú taobh thiar
de ghraic ghruama an ghráta, ag éisteacht
le ise is eisean ag sníomh snáthaid shíoraí
scannail is streachailt, náirí nua naimhde
agus sceideal na sochraide.
D'fholaigh mé m'aghaidh,
mo leiceann á chuimilt agam lena chliabhrach
go dtí nár chuala mé tada ach mo Dhada,
a chuisle cothrom, seasta, buan
amhail fuaim folaithe faoi amhrán na mbroigheall –
tuile agus trá tonnta ag bualadh in agahaidh aille,
macalla ag canadh i bpluais mhara.

An Echo of Ocean

A dark November morning
in my grandmother's house,
where skeletons of trees creaked overhead,
threatening us with sharp twigs.
I sat folded within my father's arms
by the range, where turf glowed red
behind the black-toothed grimace of the grate
as she and he discussed the endless strands
of scuffles, scandals, schedules of funerals.
I nestled further into my nook,
pressed my cheek to his chest
until all I heard was the steady,
sturdy thump of my father's heart,
the ebb and flow of ceaseless tide,
and below the call of cormorants,
a distant echo crashing through cliff caves.

Faobhar an Fhómhair

Lá Lúnasa ag faobhar an Fhómhair
tá préacháin ag rince trí fhoraois gaoithe.
Lúbann abhainn idir na crainn,
áit a ndreapann seanathair síos lena gharmhac
chun clocha a chaitheamh san uisce.
Preabann púróga agus sleamhnaíonn trí
chraiceann na habhann, ag tumadh go tóin.
Casann siad i gciorcail chomhlárnacha,
a chuasanna ag cnagadh ar a chéile.
Lastuas, tá fáibhile ag faire ar an gcruth.
De dhearmad, ligeann sí lena greim
ar dhornán duilleoga – glasa, órga –
is scaoiltear iad le sruth.

Cusp of Autumn

On an afternoon on the cusp of autumn,
crows dance in a forest of wind.
Here, a river tumbles between the trees
where grandfather and grandson clamber
down crumbling banks and stand together,
skimming stones. Their pebbles slice through the skin
of the stream and disappear into unseen depths,
as concentric circles roll on the current.
Above, a beech watching their rings forgets herself
and drops a handful of leaves – golden, green –
sending them scattering into the stream.

Póigín Gréine

Scaipeann bricíní gréine
ar dhroichead do shróine
amhail ballóga ar chraiceann breac
a shnámhann trí scátha dorcha is solas ómra
ar a shlí suas srutha,
dall ar shúile an iolair.

Freckle

Freckles sweep
over the bridge of your nose
like speckles on the skin of a trout
that swims through shallow shadows
dappled with amber
on its path upstream,
blind to the eye of an eagle.

Scáil an Seáil

I ndiaidh taispeántas ealaíne de chuid Brian Lalor

Clapsholas.

Éiríonn sí as scáileanna liath, le cúlú

ó ghrágaíl agus glagarnach an mhargaidh dhearmadta.

Trí bhruscar báite, siúlann sí na cnoic i dtreo a baile,

a guth leath-phlúchta, seanbhean ina préachán piachánach
clúdaithe le clóca dorcha, dúnta le dorn ag a scornach.

Crochann braonta léar lonrach ar na díonta, áit a siúlann sí
ag stamrógacht léi trí chúlsráideanna coincréiteacha.

Lastuas, tá sreanga sínte, faobhar géar idir cathair

is spéir. I measc lúbra na lánaí, tá na locháin beo,

lasta le loinnir ómra gach lampa sráide.

Ise an scáil folaithe ar chiumhais gach sméideadh súl.

Seolann sí an oíche ar imeall a seáil,

agus maireann macalla na staire i gcoiscéim a sáil.

The Shawlie's Shadow

After an art exhibition by Brian Lalor

Dusk.

She looms out of shallow shadows,
moves from cackle and call of past market stalls.

Unseen, she shuffles toward her hilltop home,
her breath heavy, hoarse as a crow's croak,

a black shawl clutched tightly at her throat.

She stumbles along backstreets of wet concrete
where raindrops slump rooftops.

Overhead, wet wires hover between city and sky.

In this labyrinth of lanes, amber lamplight

sets each puddle aflame, alive.

Palimpsest— she is the darkness

that lurks on the brink of a blink,

the past made manifest,

carrying nightfall on the frayed edge of her shawl

and the echo of this city in each footfall.

Na Cailleacha

"Women who love to write poetry are the hagfish of the world. We eat everything. We eat the language. We eat experience. We eat other people's poems." – Ruth Stone

Scoite, mímhúinte, iontaisí Deilfeacha
deirfiúracha na natharacha ársa,
caithimid saolta scartha óna chéile.
Alpaimid coirp lofa, slogaimid nithe néalmhara
bainimid ruainní siollaí as marbháin mheilte.
I scáileanna mara, cuirimid aníos agus ithimid
siollaí sciobtha, consain ghoidte.
Ólaimid gealacha dubha.
Luímid lán, líonta, dúileach sa duifean
ag glacaireacht le guairneáin ghlae
ag rannaireacht as ramallae.

Hagfish

"Women who love to write poetry are the hagfish of the world. We eat everything. We eat the language. We eat experience. We eat other people's poems." – Ruth Stone

Aloof and uncivil, living fossils,
ancient snake sisters of the Delphic Sybil,
we spend lifetimes apart.
We devour rotting remains,
we scavenge on the strange,
stripping morsels of consonants
from crumbling corpses.
In ocean shadows,
we exhume and consume
stolen syllables.
We gulp black moons.
See us lie, gloating in the gloom,
spinning rhymes from swirls of slime.

Mamó

D'iompair tú m'ubhán ionat
mo bhriathar mar bhraon
bídeach i do bhroinn.

Anois, seasaim ag do shochraid
leanbh lae á luascadh agam
súil liom ar an mbreith
is súil liom ar an mbás
sruth fola ag sileadh asam –
caoineadh corcairdhearg.

Grandmother

You carried the egg that made me
in your womb, the whisper of a word
that became my world.

Now I stand at your funeral,
newborn nestled into my neck,
one eye on life, the other on death
as blood trickles down my thighs –
a crimson cry.



A meditation on the relationship between creativity, parenthood, the female body, and the natural world, *Dordán, do Chroí | A Hummingbird, your Heart* is Doireann Ní Ghríofa's first dual-language publication. It offers moments of intense pain and longing condensed into a chapbook of poems each 'so vivid, so slight'.

Doireann Ní Ghríofa's poems have appeared in literary journals in Ireland and internationally. The Arts Council has twice awarded her bursaries in literature. Her Irish language collections *Résheoid* and *Dúlasair* are both published by Coiscéim. Earlier this year, she was nominated for a Pushcart Prize (USA) and her pamphlet of poems in English *Ouroboros* was longlisted for The Venture Award (UK). www.doireannnighriofa.com



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