

Creative Editorial

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Given the journal's theme of crisis, we expected submissions that skewed towards melancholy, cynicism and a certain negativity. With environmental disaster no longer looming but occurring and extreme political ideologies becoming globally normalised, there certainly seemed crises aplenty to motivate, or perhaps demotivate, writers. Submissions to the journal gave us stories focusing on issues both local and universal, from homelessness and grief, to mental health and abortion. And at the deadline for submissions, November 2019, none of us yet had an inkling of the medical crisis that would eventually envelop the world and change our very way of living.

Yet it was difficult not to take away from these creative pieces a sense of hope and connection. The two submissions which we accepted dealt with differing issues; colonialism in Michael Kurian's poem "Into the Kalari", and war and abortion in Gráinne O'Hare's short story "Same Time Next Tuesday", yet each celebrated connection with a quietude and ferocity that was simply uplifting. With the successful repeal campaign in the Republic of Ireland two years ago, and less than one year ago for Northern Ireland, conversations surrounding bodily autonomy are topical. In "Same Time Next Tuesday", the friendship of two women dances around issues of sexuality while World War II rages in the background. Fighting colonialist rhetoric through a determined love for one's own culture certainly provides a pleasant counterpoint to some modern immigration policies. In "Into the Kalari", a young combatant celebrates the strength of their cultural heritage in the face of colonial power. These two pieces refuse to pull their punches when they speak of the cruelty and cost of crises, but, even more fiercely, they speak of the love behind grief and the pride behind resistance. In this time of social distancing, they remind us of the value of human connection, whether it is forged on a war-torn street in Belfast or a sacred arena in India, and what we all might look forward to when our current crisis has been overcome.