

## OF OCHRE AND ASH

(cover image is a painting by [Veronique Paquereau](#))

'Eleanor Hooker's poetry has a way of resonating in the reader like secret histories passed down through the generations. It is a strange effect: the drift of these poems seems to have been with us even before we began reading and lingers long after the book is closed. They are both strangely familiar and incredibly new and run the gamut of human experience: poems of sickness and healing; journeys and journeying, poems of the dead and the unborn; of storm and calm. The world she describes for us is by turns unsettling, mythic and surreal, but ultimately so exquisite and affirming that it can only be our own.'

John Glenday

'Few Irish poets can boast a voice as singular and recognisable as Hooker's, a poet who has already gifted us with a richly symbolic mythic landscape. *Of Ochre and Ash* is an exploration of grief and its topographies, both personal and political; how the difficult history of Ireland intersects with landscape

[...]

*Of Ochre and Ash* sees Eleanor Hooker writing powerful poetry, breaking new ground.'

Jessica Traynor *Poetry Ireland Review*

'It is hard to recall a working poet who brings such varied secular skills and talents to the sacred writing moment.

[...]

Hooker is a poet of considerable complexity. Sometimes the skeins of mood and metaphor refuse to unravel and we suspect we haven't gone all the way to a poem's innermost core. Yet we are satisfied nonetheless, exhilarated by the journey though unsure we have reached its destination. A poet's function can be as much to evoke as to explain.'

Éamon Mag Uidhir *Dublin Review of Books*

'Hooker [...] perseveres in her investigation of strange tantalising histories while the dead hang around, more alive than ever.'

Martina Evans *Irish Times*

Dad's by the hearth, encouraging ash back to life.  
I've never lived in a house that held its heat I tell him,  
unable to say I miss you in case he recollects  
his death. Somewhere in the house  
a child is crying. Find her, he says.

'There's an awful lot in those six lines. The enigmas of ordinary Irish rural speech, its mind-challenging indirectness; what's not said; a flavour of Isabel Allende's novel *The House of the Spirits*; pathos; a simplicity which is not the same thing as directness.'

Ciaran O'Driscoll

'Reading Eleanor Hooker's collection feels like entering a novel made up of surreal, complex narratives. Everything is itself and something *other*, there are many selves, doppelgangers and the pages are populated by myths, family memories and histories.'

Caroline Maldonado *Agenda*