Two Poems

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Make me whole. Crushed ants, ripe moon
Pendulum caught in mid-swing.
Our love is empty, trapped in the bare mouth
Of once gravid dreams.
Our rire does not separate us from
What crawls any more than our
Bras could take flight.
Why am I moving? Salt-still eyes
Mined for generations. Our harvest
Should have come. Chaff separated—
I plucked the tender germ of our union
Far too early—and somewhere you know
The lie grows as a weed in August
Lush, greedy, with roots spreading
Far and deep, choking the "que-si?"
In quiet moments, I perceive the backward
Track of laughter, melding with
This nothingness I feel.
How could I? I prick my finger
And draw perfect rows down your back.
Rows to sow what I shall reap
The disaster of my avarice—glinting
Argent in the now still night.
The locus of my antiquity, a small
Dot on our kitchen floor
Is quickly swept up by your deft
Attempt to put everything
Under the rug.
Only in the opening have I been made whole
Happy to be cleaved in twain
Like a sapling in spring
My own mortality written in the language
Of pure love
I had no hope but you—though I thought it
I had no joy, no peace, no rest
You were the answer to my question
"Why?" The universe vibrated with
Your first breath
Pure and new
Alpha and omega
The falling snow getting deeper
They took you from me
To keep me from growing too strong
They pierced my arms, spine
They could not keep me from you
Perfect angel
Light of life.

Mary Ryan

What’s Love Got To Do
With It?: Family, Sex, and
Domestic Violence in
Contemporary Irish
Women’s Fiction

People have argued over the role and necessity of romance and relationships in contemporary women’s fiction. Speaking in terms of typical chick lit, for instance, romance is one aspect of the genre that is almost always commented upon. Despite detractors of women’s fiction arguing that an emphasis on romance and relationships suggests that all women want is to find a man, it presents an interesting way of examining how these novels discuss and depict family issues such as marriage, sex, motherhood, and domestic violence.

The family was long viewed as being at the heart of Irish life, and Irish women in particular were expected to have no ambitions other than to be a wife and mother. This attitude was taught to children from a young age; young Irish girls were taught ‘to be chaste, obedient, respectable and docile’ (Hayes 2001, 117)—in other words, they were taught to be the subservient ideal for wives and mothers. Though these attitudes were largely enforced by the Church, whose teachings were adopted by the entire nation, the law in Ireland also reflected these same attitudes. Women’s lives were strictly confined to the private domain, and women’s issues were largely silenced and