Ní Chuileannáin subject matter and style can prove challenging to a reader

Discuss with regard to poems you have studied:

Poems:

Following

On lacking a killer instinct

Lucina Schynning in Silence of the nicht

Street

Translation

To Niall Woods and Xenya Ostrovskaia, married in Dublin on 9 September 2009

Ní Chuileannáin’s style is definitely challenging to some readers. Most notable in relation to style, is that the poems are in free-verse which in my opinion makes the poems less fluid. This can make Ní Chuileannáin’s poems a tough read for some, as it’s atypical of most poems. Ní Chuileannáin’s poems are usually not direct in their meaning, so most readers can only truly grasp the meanings of the poem through studying them, and even then, the meaning can be ambiguous. We see this in “Following”, where the beginning is ambiguous as to it’s meaning, the start where she follows her dad through the fair could mean a number of things “So she follows the trail of her father’s coat through the fair Shouldering past beasts packed solid as books, And the dealing men nearly as slow to give way –“, this could mean she is struggling against a masculine society, or it could mean she is finding it difficult to be as great as her dad, or it could even just simply be a past memory. Discerning these things is what makes Ní Chuileannáin’s poems difficult for many readers.

Ní Chuileannáin’s subject matter is also challenging for some readers. Ní Chuileannáin’s favourite topic for poems is about death, love, reflection and memories, which are much more challenging topics to read than, for example, nature. Ní Chuileannáin is also very political in her poetry, being both a nationalist and a feminist, these themes are seen sprinkled throughout her poetry. For example, in “Street”, we see a girl that is acting in a masculine way, “Dangling a knife on a ring at her belt”, and is assumed to be a butcher, another profession typically seen as a masculine role. And in “On lacking the Killer Instinct”, Ní Chuileannáin likens the British soldiers to “stupid dogs”, and the Irish I.R.A guerrilla fighter as “clever”. And also, references the crimes of Cromwell in Lucina Schynning in Silence of the Nicht, where it is written “Cromwell had departed, and they saw The sky growing through the hole in the roof.” This can be challenging and sensitive topics for some, but Ní Chuileannáin’s poems do not pay heed to sensitivities.

Ní Chuileannáin’s subject matter is also