

Science Fiction and Fantasy Poetry Association Annual Contest Long Form Winner, 2025

irish weather

by Quinn Young

*"We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried.
Most people were silent."
J. Robert Oppenheimer*

there were dog whelks in the river,
unshelled, bodies tender, pale as dreams
in irradiat—

—wakewater;
 (she will see you lower
 the long-handled steer—)
she kneels in horsetracks,
lifts a white plastic cup
 (this crushed mouth open)
 that cuts her hand
 by the edge
of the

 water
soaked down in ashes
fluttering like infant heartbeat
through fingers stirring, catching black
as the tins and cracked glass
laid out for rain—

—water,
rotten iron ring (at her temples)—

there were some
 who saw the bloom of darkness as it came
the tear in our time
 it burned our eyes and we saw nothing
 as a great exhalation bowed the rocks and
 rolled against us
who jumped into the

water to escape it
 and burned when coming up for air,
graveyards remain
with burned black facings /
/ beggar's teeth (on the grey sky)
on the million souls speared through,
raven yards—
a castle stood
where clots of hair fall
under thin shears,
dance this night round
 and strike up the céili
for the rearing
 bonfire effigy
of
 splitstuff core, hollow scale,
 the talons of
 her daughter,

bird save wing;

*the waves churned though she
kept above them, holding tight
her burden*

little girl of eleven limbs,
white palms embryonic in the sea womb— it
rains.