

The real artist, I was once told, is not controlled by emotions, driven to creation by the lightning bolt of a moment. The real artist, like Ana Corbero, takes those moments and owns them.

Corbero is the puppeteer of her feelings, never possessed by them, yet possessing them all. Don't let her metric and precision fool you –Ana is the sentiment she moulds and transforms like the clay she touches, pain and mirth dissected, reassembled and given as offering.

Ana's poetry always strikes me like a bomb. First a loud boom. Then a hazy silence. And then it hits me. It catches me right in that part of the stomach where reason meets sentiment, where neurons swim or drown in bile or balm, that elusive place hunted by scientists and priests alike. How could I ever had thought I knew a carob tree before I learned the secret that its sweet fruits are daggered tears, hanging scabs coming off its belaboured bark? How have I missed all these years that the sea sways the wooden womb of a cabin like the cradling place I should have never left?

Ana's poems are complex filigreed stuff she tries to pass as garden variety, much like the love poem she names as such. And her imagery is so rich and often so deceitfully absurd one is caught smiling with the brain, seeing with the nose, smelling with the eyes.

Yet that intricacy is rendered with such ease and fluidity one risks missing the coatings that give her poetry its final colour. Even sadness in her poetry can go amiss, dressed as it is in happier garbs. But Ana is not misled by the disguised sentiment – her genius is that she will eternalise that emotion not in ink, but in grooves, etch it with the tip of her knife, and let us feel it with our hands.

And we may cry, and may laugh, but we will love it all.