

Book Review

by Roslyn Fuller

Town of Fiction

By The Atlantis Collective
(Self-published)

SOMEONE (and since no one else is doing it, I suppose it will have to be me) should make it known to the raft of aspiring artistes out there that nostalgia alone cannot carry a story, however short it is.

This was my biggest problem with *Town of Fiction*, a collection of 13 short stories from the Galway-based Atlantis Collective. The tales are united under a theme of darkness, but instead of sewing this dark thread into the fabric of their stories in an evocative manner, these pieces give the impression of a group of writers who are just playing at being bad.

For example, we are promised on the back cover that "a woman meticulously plans a murder". But inside it turns out that she employs about the same level of thoroughness that I use to plot my grocery list. Stabbing versus strangling? Corn flakes versus muesli? Yawn. Who cares?

Indeed, the collection's single saving grace is Alan Caden's contribution *Bust*, an account of a drugged-up yet intelligent homeless person which shows some witicism and insight, and carries the narrative voice well.



These pieces
give the
impression of
a group of
writers who
are just playing
at being bad

Caden's other contribution *In His Shoes* (in which an Arab playboy turns suicide bomber to save his family from an offended gangster) is similarly strong in narrative, and might have made a decent longer story, but in this form comes across as wildly improbable, giving the impression of someone trying too hard to be multicultural without having the experience to pull it off.

Dara O Foghlu's two pieces *The Final Flight of But-I-Am* (about the death of an orphan) and *Lonely Hearts Club* (on trying to find love on the internet) also deserve an honourable mention, being readable but falling down on their endings.

Overall, however, the majority of contributions lack true depth of character and a solid grasp of psychology – oh-so-necessary when dealing with the dark side – and are stylistically wanting (bear in mind, I am far from a stickler for style).

It's also questionable if a 92-page book in large type is worth €15. In this case I think that's about €14 too much.



Roslyn Fuller is the author of political thriller *ISAK*.

More information about the Canadian, her work and the

Irish Writers' Exchange can be found at www.irishwriters-exchange.com