

In Brendan's Boat, A Letter From Ireland

Frail as ash in a bowl, perhaps
Brendan did make it,
a voyage that snipped nautical law
like new paper, landing his cloaked
and salted body quivering on the edge
of this country's dirt.
Perhaps he did "pre-date the Norse"
and glimpsed Labrador's black breathing
arc like the sleek back of a whale
shining through maritime spit
and thought of his brothers, as I do,
 in a squirrelly huddle
 in their stone church hovel,
as I was in Glendalough, Ireland
god fading as fast as Brendan, yet
believing his breath woven in wind
combing the backlit hills of heather,
and believing I'll make it back
to spit myself onto the guttural
green rock of Newfoundland's south
shore, where I was born, scouting
the Atlantic depth, the sea floor's crag
and canyon. Skimming the swell, the spray
and wave, bread-crumbling
the journey in gull squawks.

Ken Babstock