

## On Reading Audre Lorde at Annaghmakerrig

*I feel, therefore I can be free*—Audre Lorde

Wading through dew-wet whins, briar sedge, asphodel & bracken  
you near the water's edge, not to cast yet another line of pickup,

punch or aspersion, but to write your confession: that you've learned  
everything worth burning from wombsong—which, if air could speak,

translates to *life's inner flame rising in its raising*—and fold it in  
a paper boat you set ablaze / afloat for an atavistic world to envision

not as symbol but necessity. You expect an uneventful crossing  
yet here on shore how can one judge the size of capsizing whitecap

selfies, humblebrag and rants, the flotillas of sipped straws?  
No telescope does it justice. You scale saltchuck down to puddle,

shake a snow globe full of rain instead of plastic. Call the lough  
a lake, whatever familiar your body swims in, that ancient,

fatherless vessel. Through vision's dimming corner-slit  
you fathom askance the well of all wishes—granted to be

reclaimed at the end of the line when day's fisheye dilates  
and gulps. Across a shirred letter-littered surface too equivocal

to wound into words your fugitive fire drifts further, further...  
bright as a Vedic pyre, its saturated ash sifting to the floor.

All your life, fooled by a thirst no water will quench, you stand  
on the bank of one more silence to be broken and say again: *Poetry*

*is not a luxury*...it's our first and last line of defense, our birthright  
against the storm, the light by which we form and scatter our magic.