Connemara Dreaming

Small bogs pockmark a shiver of green fields.
It’s cold, and I’m perched on a rocky mound
Just where the mist begins to thin.

Where the slope ends, old sheep bones
Jut out; a tiny feather or two, caught on a ribcage,
Tremble with the wind.

I lean forward into the day.
Somewhere, further into the mist,
Is the coast.

I strain to hear any of its language,
That deep ocean swell coiling
Into small inlets, tide at first
Seeping in, almost silent, then thickening

The raucous, insistent cries
Of gulls; drone of a motor
Boat, engine suddenly revving. A ferry
Further out to sea, returning from one of the islands,

Its wake trailing memories. But here,
A different tide, black-faced sheep,
Quiet on the soft, moist turf, nibble at the grass.

I want to stay, drink in the green,
Dissolve into the mist, to run with the clouds
On tops of mountains, to rest my body,
dwell awhile, soothe a deep ineffable divide within me, an exile.

There’s grief in that, here too,
Stone cottages, collapsed
and dishevelled, windows
Gaping, sheep dung on earthen floors.

Chimneys blackened, rimmed with moss,
The hollowed remains of hope.
Yet an aliveness too,
In the bones beyond reach

Thrust into the air like ogham sticks
The pools that hold the light even on the

Keith Mac Nider, ‘Connemara Dreaming’.
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darkest day. A standing stone
And another, aligned

With stories deeper than sight,
Something far older, ancient beginners’
Feet, tracks below the surface that hum through
The earth, stories that call us back,

Nudge us forward,
A tidal sway, reminds us, like the slow,
soft drip of Irish rain,
That the quiet dreaming of a Connemara

Morning, breathes within us too.

Keith Mac Nider