

Upon Hearing Amy Winehouse at St. James' Church in Dingle
By Partridge Boswell

Grief without song could be any stone chapel built of loss
packed with aging villagers lulled reticent as rue
by a rote bell's tongue, hemmed by iron gates and a yew
tree lurking mirthlessly beside a burial ground where moss-

patinaed saints and earth angels gather round relic icons
of threadbare hand-me-down faith. You sit/kneel/stand on
your misericord, an eaten Job in the organ belly's drone,
sorting your parents' hoarded aggregate—clothes pawn

and charity shops won't take, sewing kits, boxes of old
Polaroids of anonymous sepia-people you wouldn't be here
without, file drawers of past taxes, uniforms from the war,
wedding dress, unworn shoes unfit for a holy soul...

—and that's just the tip, to say nil of unspeakable sins
in attic and basement. Macular shorebirds scan whitecaps
for questions the mind's eye can alight: dim synapse
of a candlelit nave, musty kneelers, a deacon's

chair from Suriname. Grief without song is wasted pain.
According to patron James, *faith in works*—in real acts
of creation—amplifies our part in salvation's soundtrack
louder than wafers, wine or words of mumbled expiation

dissolved on penitent tongues. In your rusted anechoic
husk, your veins blood-thrum a rushing river-hymn,
an electric fence of nerves ticking in your cerebellum—
until silence clears its throat...and from her first chthonic

tremolo it comes as no shock: how from Galway to Summerhill
churches are being repurposed as concert halls by clergy who swear
love's lost call note still lingers, runic under the moored murmur
of all those services you sat unmoved through, the supernal

flatulence of organ bellows at last revised in fidelity rare
as a black velvet angel with spindly legs and mental hair,
her aqueous blues beguiling as the B-side of prayer
beside an ocean we couldn't hear but always knew was there.