



Leaving the Island

I am *the Grillagh* — a swell
of stained water, born in the mud near *Carntogher*.
I course to *Tirnony*, bypassing dolmens and glebeland
to where salmon poachers gather. By blackthorn and culverts,
they gaff upstream swimmers. Roe, still hanging
on silver, shimmers. Children steal spawn
from squelch and reeds, lighting *Bensons*
in dens of Benweed. I contort between Gorse and Bladderwort,
fall into *the Bann*, find maelstrom ahead where I diffuse
in Atlantic flow. I skip guttural stones over
tight undertow into folds of shores, where smoke wafts
over *Rathlin* to *Bowmore* to steal places in drams.
My banks diverge to hold and gather names.
They could be bottled, labelled as my million parts.
Like salmon, I've travelled far, from smolt to here. So, for each place
I lay smooth stones in gravel. I know I will come back
and dig them up later and end my journey back at the heart.

Jo Burns, Germany