

Island at the End of the World

*Be that as it may, it were better
for me to know
- The Voyage of Máel Dúin*

After the slathering, foul-mouthed
miscreations, the mind-splitting,
temptations — succubus, incubus,

whirlpool and water spout—
the monstrous waves, the gut-drying,
brain-rotting calms, the false

dreams and empty hopes: Psyche's
lamp and Eve's apple, the sweet
voices singing *Let go Let it go*

the temple bones cracking
twisting branching out
behind the forehead,
the hounds in hot pursuit

that golden-locked head
yawing in the troughs
nonsense syllables
in contralto

the white-haired Merlin inside
the ice, his eyes wide
open, visions and spells
frozen on his lips

to set foot at last
on the island at the end of the world
only to have it sink
close-mouthed into the deep