

Finding Your Soap

In the cupboard is a chunky jar
layered with old soap.
I pour these misshapen jewels
onto a sheet of newspaper
and inhale a sluice of remembrance.

Me, kneeling at the bath.
You, pouring kettle-warm water onto my hair,
singing supple lullabies,
frothing a kindness of lather
from the hoarded stubs.
I recall those effervescent pinks and limes,
subdued greens and ambers
(zealously accumulated)
that fifty-five years later are
spread lustrous before me.

I wonder if at
the bottom of the jar
there is a piece from 1970?
The year you stopped your washing
and I drifted through adolescence
towards exotic shampoo,
and a shaky self-reliance.

As my hands explore the marbled lozenges
you are once again in front of me,
beckoning with a vast bath towel,
fistfuls of treasured remnants
technicoloured at our feet.