Jes Battis

Chronic Hologram

The lights at Shoppers make you want to die
A drug might keep your epithelials tame
You hear the pharmacist release a sigh

An ex once said *you never even try*
You fled the scene and burned in winter rain
The lights at Shoppers make you want to die

A cloud of brilliance hisses near your eye
The Christmas bulb you lost, the little pain
Repeats a string of lights (though Oscar fried)

You'd love a garbage can to keep poems dry
A lid to still the light, a working drain
You hear the pharmacist release a sigh

Behind him burns the colourful supply
Alembics, pills, and foams that barely stain
The best words of your life remain inside

A knot, an unfound light, a scudded sky,
A throat collapse, a hot neuronal strain
A discount card, a broken screen, his sigh
A perfect voiceless crystal opens wide.

Scar Song

The wound care nurse
speaks softly
the way you would
to a stray cat
or a forest fire.

She hands me
paper bags
full of non-
prizes:
mesh underwear
antiseptic ribbons
Steri-Strips
non-woven
sponges
and scissors
to make my own
crooked lines.

A chronic wound
disobeys
the healthy stages
lingering
the guest you wish
you could kick out
but now he's rooting
through you
in search of
something
at the very back
of your cupboard
maybe
vanilla

or
memory.

I know
the numbers,
feel
the depth,
as she dives in
pushing her tool
into the collapsed star
of pain
the dark
I sense without seeing
where inside
meets out

Waiting
for the edges to knit
the soft scar tissue
paper thin
layer by layer
holding my breath
with each movement
spilling my limbs
into bed
like phyllo pastry
so liable to tear
out of spite.

Lifting myself
tenderly
cataloguing
rise and fall

mapping
the terrain
listening
to my skin
the petty feuds
of blood cells
and the low hum
of the scar
as it tells me
everything I need.