

Jamie McKendrick

Azurite

It's azurite, he said, makes the pool blue.
A green-tinged blue Venetian artists used
for painting sea, keeping lapis lazuli
for their hazy, angel-haunted skies.
We'd driven out to the ramshackle farm,
where the farmer's son had filled a paddock
with scrapped cars as a commercial sideline,
to find your dented Audi a replacement door.

You'd have thought the pool might have given him
pause, with the pride he took in it, might have made
him wonder whether that seepage of oil,
those rusting wrecks were its best protection.
It was like Paul Nash's aircraft graveyard,
all lunar mashed metallic celery,
but that was wartime Cowley 1940,
this the gorse-flecked Ridgeway

a decade ago. So now I've forgotten
how to get there and if you ever got the door
though I remember the pool's oblivious blue,
how I scooped up a chill palmful
surprised it was colourless and how
speckled trout all facing an invisible altar
hung in the uplift, their eyes unlidged,
while the azure current coiled about them.

When I call on you, drained, bandaged, far removed
from any words, from the craft that
you've lifted up and left your mark on,
I lapse into silence and stare at
the tumbled lump of malachite that's been
lying on your garden table – its seams of green
are what azurite becomes when exposed
to air, black-banded but still bright as life.