

## The Lost School of Botany

She held the Peter Rabbit tray  
with Lucozade and tonic water  
in which a lozenge fizzed saffron pollen.

Then brought out her medical instruments:  
an auriscope, cone-headed, with a gaud  
of bright light to peer, tunnel-eyed,  
into the hanging gardens of my ear;

and her spatula, bird's foot light,  
to depress my tongue and see a lost school  
of botany: stamens, anthers, pistils,  
the seed-box of my larynx.

There was a glint of white in her chestnut hair  
as if she were transmuting into  
her own silverware; half a halo  
or the speculum on a bird's wing.

She shook her Fahrenheit thermometer,  
the glass broke in an unhappy accident;  
balls of mercury rolled down  
the fragile lifeline of her hand

and onto my receptive palm.  
I caught them, as many as I could,  
little balls on a hand-held bagatelle.

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