

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Bantry Bay

by Gill Hilton

You can't actually see the shells in the photo,
though I can show you a handful cradled in my perfectly tiny jar.

But you can tell that the shells are there.
For they send up their sunlight into our delighted faces,
our too-fine hair, made halos by the sea breeze.

What can be seen
is a moment to come
when we lift our eyes to redouble each other's already-shared joy.
That skip of joy
in things that could be missed.

I think we were the only ones who could see the shells in such a way.
A genetic pathway has led us here
and after all that time we hover in an instant
when only we touch the waves' polishing
and feel the sea's call
in these miniature cathedrals.

Treasure after miniscule treasure slips between our fingers
to re-gather into something bigger than even we can know.
Every moment that you held me, as I shape-shifted from your wide-awake baby into
someone
now morphed into a mother herself,
is here
in this photograph.

And the shells are still somewhere
in the memories of our matched faces,
our shared mess of hair,
regardless of the breeze.

The shells are in our bones.
They resonate past time
And out into the universe.
The stardust that you now are.

Mum, I am breathing.

And I find myself in a place where memories are washed up all the time,
though some are still laid out
to recover in the warming air.

Now that I am home and sufficiently dry,
I find that remembering is a chair that it is hard to sit still in.
Ah, Mum. We have more beaches to walk.