



Matchbox Chapel

by Natasha Kinsella

I iron the trying into the sleeve of the day.
Steam lifts, slow and silver, gathering like an island:
a borderless hush.

I learned early: care was a gesture
meant to leave nothing behind.
Discipline, not thrift.

I used to sing my quiet:
a thistle-throat hymn, sweet on the sting.
Saint or bride in puckered poly.

Sheets pegged into sky tents,
pale chapels for girls already learning to vanish.

We grew up inside the hush.
Knowing came in slips,
an oblique mosaic of overheard things.

Velvet ropes strung around our history.
Kerbs flared like a threat.
A girl lip-syncing silence into safety.

I miss the feast noise:
cousins orbiting like midges,
wains passed from lap to lap,
spells cast sideways,
not for luck, but forgetting.

A ribbon buried in the hedge to bind a lie.
A raw potato rubbed on a wart.
You had to believe it for the cure to work.



St Anthony tucked behind the fuse box.
A bible asleep under the mattress,
not for faith, but ballast.

Flowers pressed hush flat
between our cough and confession.
We blinked, not wailed.
Nodded where we should kneel.

I dissolved the wafer on my tongue,
waiting for a taste that never came.

Now at night, I nestle my child in,
breath a metronome I almost believe.

And in a matchbox chapel,
she lays out the dead:
a bee on a glove, petals for mourners,
a violet placed where a psalm might go.