

## **Jade Succulent**

With daylight getting dirty  
and people walking home through the city park,

fragments of time  
are seized in the spill of language

under a plane tree's chaotic abandon.  
In the dusk

rows of jade succulent pallor  
appear profanely lit

like a photographic negative –  
it's the same in memory's dark terrain  
where kindling embers constitute  
a mourning song

or an unfinished poem,  
to burn and renew at the same time.

Without this redemptive passage  
the past has no refrain

and you and I might cease to speak  
in the light of these autumnal fires.

*Deborah Staines*