**Searching Shells and Memories**

Returning to an old familiar shore

but treading uncertain ways

as feet sink into wet sand.

The clouds clear after grief-like showers,

my pockets big enough for that rainbow,

signalling, when no one is watching

except the gulls

skimming the seas’ multitude

of dark blue shadows.

Truth is I know what I’m looking for,

a return of past delight,

tiny brown needle-sugar shells

and thick-lipped dog-whelks.

The sand is soft, then firm

towards the muddy lace of tide.

Rock pools beckon

with treasures of pink pelican-foot

and twirling peaks of wentletrap.

Through the dimpled window of the sea

violet sea-snails float upside down

and ridged coffee-cream limpets

are tucked under stones,

wrinkled sling-winkles nestle

in cradles of pebbles,

clinging to their rocky cribs.

Soft breezes of nostalgia

hum tunes of folded away yesterdays

held in the echoes of a shell to the ear

and the heart is stirred long after reaching home.

 Peggy Rees