You must be an object
of value, book, to have
been sliced so thinly, so
deliberately right to
the rind, then wrapped in such
quality paper. There's
a ham from Spain I'd like
to compare you with - it's
served in slivers so thin
they catch in the breeze. Furled
in roses on a plate
or in parcels in the
mouth, there seems somehow to
be more than can have made
up the original
joint — like Saints' bones that's part
of the miracle. The
pigs are known as olives
on legs, and their dark fat's
dripped away over months.

It tastes like wine drunk with
old friends, then it's gone. But
a book that is savoured
can be savoured again.
POPCORN

I’m so sorry to have
caught you half out of your
jumper, but what does it
mean to write on what’s there?

To describe you as sweet
or salty and mean me,
and mean jealous or sweet-
in-the-human-way? Is

it like when we dress up
Henry as Santa, and
watch him scoot around and
say he hates Christmas? Yes,

how does it feel to be the
popcornth of shadow on
the cinema screen, hoiked
into the beamlight that

a stranger’s story might play
on – might distorted be
thrown on – your manhandled
but very yours body?
PHONE

I fear I’ll be made to explain to an expert how I have damaged you, left you in a taxi,
or turned to find you gone, or exposed you to some vile internet thing, how I tried to fill you with holiday pictures but not all that we do is happy or memorable. I’ve heard your blue light keeps me awake and it’s bad to sleep in the same or a different room because of emergencies. You have ways of letting me know, but I check on you anyway. My mother can play with you, but should know that I’m watching. My friends and I are making a date: we are going for dinner without you.
What about a biscuit? I hold it up like a compact – is there any thing I won’t use as a mirror? It’s so easy to say things just like that. e.g. there’s nothing quite like laundry – it’s either being cared for or it’s caring for yourself. How many times have I heard that soft crunch inside my own head and wondered if anyone could hear it – and never listened out for someone else’s crunch?
SHOWER

All of the best bits in
my poems are for you,
like that time I said the
shower head, broken, was

like a cobra, spitting,
and pointed out its hood
and articulated
body, cold blood and writhe

when not pinned by the neck.
I wrote that because you
said (when we were playing
that game) that what you love

about me is how I
see the world differently,
and it feels good to live
up to love's version of

you. Would you say receipts
are the ghosts of money?
I can tell from my screen
its a beautiful day.
Darling, are we like this
squeezed soap - two slivers cupped
into a useful whole?
Marbled, do our edges
melt in the anteroom
of the working day? Are
we inextricable,
adulterated? The
heat and wet of us feels
binding. They say the proof
that's in a bond's a break
as likely anywhere
as the seam. When I think
that I am cleanest, I
am really wearing the
thinnest layer of you.
Is it, our relationship even a thing? Or do we put it in the category of clouds, rain forests, natural sponges et cetera – that which is marvellous and strange, but which, close up, doesn't really exist, being only raindrops, individual trees, discrete masses of cells – and if we do, does that mean that there is no ‘us’, or that there is an ’us’, but it only exists in those moments we are doing things together, or not doing things, but thinking of each other?

And, if that is the case, should we not perhaps be kinder and do more things? I only ask because I’m watching Saving the Rainforest and they’ve spent the whole time tending to individual trees.
BATHTUB

Simply by gathering
in a pool in my hands
the cut-crystal rope it
extrudes from its faucet,

by rinsing my razor
in its outsized bowl,
and rebaptising my face
in its font-waters, I,

kneeling the while on stone
in orthodox prayer,
have transmuted bathtub
to basin, and in so

doing have made myself
appear smaller, more young,
and therefore more brave, as
I do the not-so-brave

things I already do,
and more forgivable,
having done so many
unforgivable things.