

MASKS

What should we do with the masks?
Those misshapen parodies of ourselves
sewn together in bygone bedrooms
from fragments of better faces, better souls.

Perhaps they should be burned,
and we should dance, laughing
and yelling, around melting skin,
smoke filled eye sockets, blackening lips.

What catharsis, what deliverance
to watch those old selves burn
and vindicate the pain of when
we tore dead skin from the living.

Or perhaps we should keep them
on hooks above fireplaces
to take down on winter evenings,
And laugh at the square jawlines, overly full lips.

After all, they were a kindness once
Hopelessly misguided, but utterly sincere.
Those old faces that kept us hidden
from a cold, unfriendly world.

Perhaps we need them still,
Those selves we once tried to be
If only to draw us back to the mirror,
prod cheeks, lift eyelids and wonder

If today might be the day
we find that elusive flap of skin,
pull away the final layer,
and meet ourselves for the first time.

- JOHN BIGLANDS