Elizabeth Walton

Under a Wobbegong Moon

You may find yourself beached on a salt-sky dawn,
looking for a Caddick foot, for a Ponzi rumbled in Ecklonia
along a seahorse shore. You may find yourself walking
a little closer in, asking, what is that modal skin—

is it from the sea or fallen from mottled sky? And you may
pull a rib, towing the flinching fin back into the undertow.
You might ask yourself, *Shahs Shabaka*, what does this world look like
under a wobbegong moon?

Because some days are dusky, and the sun is shy,
days when the shadow-moon chases the night from sky view.
On these days, you will remember how you dragged a shark
to the white shoreline, asking it to love again, to breathe and swim

into a carpet sea. How walking away made just as good a return.
I see through you and all that does not whisper to dawn's eternity.
Please, bring all that is lost, bring it back to me. You said you had the proof,
that your share would measure the penalty for past injustice,

though I ask you to lead me back to the path you swept me from,
not strap me to the whale I see out beyond the shipping lanes.
Bring me back on a rumble-tolled dawn, remind me why we came here,
was it this thunder, this turning paradise, this forgiveness

coming in on the 70% wow ... we are all made of water,
amphibious and drowning. Who said the water was to clean a baptised tide,
hiding meaning in this dawning of rotting truth? Something larger than us,
or the wobbegong strafed at dawn, clambering on a morning tide,

as the red plover cried, *who called you to this lover?* Not I, frowning
under wobbegong moon, as if to ask, how it was that I misplaced this clue.
When this is long over, I shall retire from broken skies,
from what it means to me, to the counting of the oyster catcher,

your feet, an imprint on dawn-flats where the willy wagtail bends.
A heart traced and dried in seaweed, a flinch, an earthly sense
that something is very wrong. Your foot,
a lullaby washed out in threads of sea rope; a beer bottle,

drunk and hanging in a tree; a wallaby faced towards the sea,
asking what we all want to know: where else is there to go
with all your stolen money? Dismay, dismay, I know, but I didn't always
play to win, mostly, I played for something deeper. Something simple.

Something the living simply call *living*. I know, your world of beans
only led you to this increase in a colonial fold, washed up on a morning tide,
gone again by noon. All my feet, so far intact, so far
as any tide goes, under a wobbegong moon.