

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