

## Love poem to my local swimming pool

that leaves me with your perfume  
like a proud adulterer. You have me slipping  
under your sheets every weekend, at off-peak time, of course.

To all the people that ignore the polite notice  
to 'remove muddy boots here' and smear the outdoors  
on the unsullied floor. No, I say, this is our

semi-subterranean cocoon of amniotic fluid,  
not to be mistaken for the dreary, upper world  
that chips into our lovers' shell. Yet this encroachment

continues with the perpetually damp toilet seat  
that I try not to think about, the little dribbles  
of other people's hair, tangled up in your chemicals.

But still, every time I turn the corner, you greet me  
with your soft underbelly, vast and reclined,  
posing with winking skin.

The lifeguard I had a crush on in school smiles. Her gaze  
brushes my hips, but I give her up for you and instead sit on the edge  
to play footsie with your cold blue.

How weird it is to bathe with strangers.  
With the vertical swimmers trudging past  
to gossip and gasp; the pensioner with better technique than me;

the woman tied in a pool noodle, gliding like a cloud.  
You keep seducing me back, even though my appearance  
as I emerge from your depths is no birth

of Aphrodite - hair plastered to my face  
and somehow up my nose, goggle marks as bad as chilblains,  
jelly-legs as I become a landlubber once again

and guiltily hug your direct opposite, the warm, dry towel.

I pay five pound ninety-five a session for you,  
because the solid pressure of differential equations dissolves  
on your tongue like a sugar cube,

until I am two parts chlorine, a clearer,  
truer version of myself.

And I admire you because you do exactly  
what it says on the tin.

And I love you because you brush your cheek  
against mine, giving me a lift as I breathe to the side,  
somehow saying, it's alright, I've got you.