BY THE HARBOUR WALL

The sea sparkles.
On days like this everything
good seems possible, even likely.

By the harbour wall,
where the eye can see clean
to the bottom and the stones
show themselves in their true colours,
small wooden boats ride gently up and
down, at rest but ready,
shaped like eyes.

I run mine over them,
over and over,
as a hand smoothes the flank of a horse.
The curved planks are
just what is needed.

And I'm seized with longing to live like that,
and especially to write like that —
trim poems built in the age-old ways…

but a salesman thrums with a credit card
and intones with a sneer occupational lies
There's no call, no call, we get no call at all
(with his howl of longing battened under hatches)
Most people go for fibreglass.
Lighter to handle. Low maintenance.
(Oh yes, a poem needs to be maintained,
copied and learned and read aloud for love, but)
Most people go for fibreglass…
Comes cheaper for one thing.

And the sparkling sea is fouled
by the flux from our sick bowels.
I'm infected. I'm dying.
Craft? What's the use of trying.

The use is what it always was except
that now as well as individual souls
we have a planet's life to conjure with.