

Bottles Grace Her Shelves

An antique flask packs red sand  
hand-scraped from Cape Hatteras,  
beige grains infused with shoreless  
specks of crimson shells.

A clear vase embraces glass shards  
and potsherds mined beneath rocks  
slippery from tides receding  
New England's granite coast.

Jade, sapphire, topaz, a ruby,  
cream china splashed with Wedgwood  
blue, Irish green, Rose du Barry  
or word fragments hinting history:

“aris,” “ode,” “ade in Eng”—  
treasures fractured by the sea's fury  
then stroked smooth and burnished  
by her vital ebb and flow.

An ancient decanter blends lobelia,  
aster, sweet everlasting, dried heads  
down in attic heat, with autumn leaves,  
their scarlet gold seized in seared wax.

Wooden seabirds stand watch. Yellow-legged  
sandpiper, snowy egret, sandhill crane  
tenderly carved by rough fishermen  
then delicately dabbed with earthen hues.

On her shelves she strives to bottle  
Nature's song, to wall indoors  
the soul of out, not realizing  
it's already inside her.

*for John Foster*

Charrie Hazard  
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