

SKIMMING STONE

*...but shooting stars are obscene.
— Sei Shonagon*

Intimate as a palmprint
the skimming stone weighs
a solid splash in your hand.

Each throw is like
a puckered thread
of kisses pulled from the water

or slaps teasing the patience
of the sea. But the sea
doesn't stir. In a cool

embrace it sucks each stone
down into itself as if
the stones were tongues,

down into the generous
depths where secrets lie:
leaping fish and the tunnelling

grace of dolphins rolling
out of the deep and stabbing
the surface with quick fins.

David Musgrave