

Rainy Day

Hand-washing is the thing, they say
that helps to keep us safe.

I push the plunger and the soap dispenser gurgles its last drop.

No hand-wash in the shop;
no shops open, except those that sell food,
no cheerful outings, no pub sessions,
the virus stalks the streets as in some horror film
and we must stay at home.

Sun shines in through the bathroom window
without observing social distancing;

I slide a drawer and take out cakes of soap
pilfered from hotel rooms on holidays.

In the freezer, apples stewed
with cinnamon and sugar,

in the cupboard, tins of beans and prunes,
plum wine from far-off summers;

the things we put away;

this is their time, despite the cloudless sky
this is the rainy day.

Barbara Payne