

Ilha de Moçambique Fiona Benson

What I hold most
is not the battered chapel

with its gargoyle
of a storm-dulled lamb

but the oyster shells fished up,
thick-set and heavy as brick,

half-clapped like doors
or mortared wings.

And what had been
a shut-up thing

is now a burst lock,
a broken spirit-trap,

the soupy contents
leaked to the sea.

Which leaves the pale secretions
of a tender, salted nerve:

lucent work,
this slipped and sun-shot pearl.