

M. J. DELAET

Old Skins

I flop my clothes
over a chair, old
skins, loose thoughts,
old men,
wrinkled, impotent,
limp over a ladder back.

Everything I need
can be packed
in any conch.
Inside mine,
a smaller shell
rattles,
but there is still
plenty of room if
I keep to essentials.

Do mermaids need
two handkerchiefs
or old men more
than the coins
of their faces?