

## At the Shrine of St Jude, Faversham

A kneeling bar, cushioned,  
before a metal grille that shields  
a statue; tealight candles, ten pence  
a prayer; a pinboard of photos

of those for whom supplications  
are offered – the sick, the dying –  
and yellowed newspaper cuttings  
of missing persons;

rosaries in plastic pots  
like pill jars topped with figures  
of St Jude, the near-forgotten apostle,  
the patron saint of hopeless cases;

a poster for the visit of the relics  
of a saint – Teresa's thigh and foot bones  
in a jacaranda casket, cased in Perspex –  
like Snow White's coffin – capable of healing.

St Teresa is on sale in the foyer,  
cloak and halo iridescent on a card,  
holy medal pinned above her prayer:  
*grant me the simplicity of a child.*

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