

Ram Origami

Peter Hammill

Here's the lost boy with the brittle smile,
Plastered panstick on his face,
Making himself up; for a little while
All the fragments will remain in place.
We are only what we manage to retrieve
Out of memory
(Who do you think you are?)

Inside, it's hailstorm visibility
Transformed by outer confidence and charm:
Step up to take responsibility,
Step down to keep the pieces of identity calm
And the moment we believe that we got it all in place
Is the very moment when the cup overflows,
Out of memory.

(Who do you think you are?
Where did you say you'd been?
What did you think you were?
How did it seem?
How does it seem?)

There goes the who, the what, the why and wherefore
All folded up in origami stuff:
People and places we once cared for...
We remember, but not vividly enough
And it's all blank paper when we finally open up
With not even watermarks as messages to trace
Only folds in the floe of the frozen face
Out of memory.