

36th Birthday

Tom Chandler

You say your childhood now seems
Like a dream you once had
Where you hid behind your mother's
Old stuffed chair, listening

To wrinkled relatives with cigarettes
And glasses talk of fading hope.
The light grew white and broke
Into the room with courage

And everyone sat and smoked
And watched the dust motes dance.
You hid behind your mother's
Old stuffed chair aware and heard

Them say that even the dead
Have hands but never wave hello
Or brush away the dancing flies.
Time flies off dancing

Into empty light and in the nights between
You've grown wrinkles like the beds
Of tiny rivers seen from space
That waste their weary waters

Beneath your child's eyes disguised
Behind your glasses.
You tell this to your mother
And she recalls your child's hand

Waving desperate lost hellos
From where you always used to hide
Behind her old stuffed chair that is
No longer there or anywhere.