

The Nursing Chair

lay hidden under baize in the muddle
of the auction rooms, its cover faded, its rosewood arm
peeping out, and I knew then that it needed a home.

At first you did not see me, hidden in the corner
under utility beige, you walked right past
the muddle of cots - till my baby fingers waved

as if to stop you - and you knew then
that you would bring me home, because I needed you,
because of my small and beckoning fist.

Solemn eyes under dark brows, your wiry hair pinned back,
a smell I did not belong to: how could you hold or comfort
when you yourself were exiled and broken?

The chair sits low on the ground, its back straight, a nursing chair
that has midwived mothers, some eager, some numbed,
others dreaming themselves into another place, another life.

Decades on, the chair listens, solid and soothing,
its seat stained with ink, pawed and clawed by the cats.
It creaks, warmed with laughter, stitches gape, the fluff

and stuffing escapes like a grey frizzed perm,
and bits bulge where they should not. I pat
tenderly, promising to take care of it - soon.