by locks, shadows and candles

the empty scrapbook
left alone in
corner overlooked,
binding broken.

in that corner, memories so long mocked
in that left room behind rusted lock.

a future once mistook,
dreamt in that dusty book

missing always from its meant mantle
hidden by locks, shadows and candles.

try as we might, the candle won't light

a slow-burn start
for desperate spark,
a quick-lit dream,
slipped in between

solid hands striking the struck matches
on fixed wicks and yet, no flame catches

all our wrongs right, the candle won't light

in the unkept room the cool candle handled by others
only casts a shadow that covers
and covers
and covers

walking in that constant shadow
of the stale, old-empty sorrow
speed walking on to a farther
and farther, better tomorrow

still accepting fluorescent attempts
still graciously, with veiled contempt

an unfulfilling,
“god willing . . . “
an on last-nerve,
“you two deserve . . .”

hard as we fight, the candle won’t light

no more playing the odds
no more praying for god’s

no more hope-trick due date.
no more pinprick heartbreak.

all this born with a broke-leash determination
finally falls away with a face-slap resignation

cry in the night, the candle, it just . . . it will not light

the twisted accord of life’s stock
now cruelly spent
now breaks against
the weathered rust of that sad lock
so withered by that gamble’s
last bet, to wit,
in the shadow of a candle
as yet, unlit.