

# Chocolate biscuits

Every time I come here, the chocolate biscuits  
are pretty much all I think about.

I'm ten years old. My uncle, kindly,  
says it's only puppy fat, but my nanna,  
in years to come, will take to calling me  
Two Ton Tessie and wondering out loud  
on Christmas Day whether I will ever  
find a husband. But I get ahead of myself.  
Chocolate biscuits. A packet always open  
on the top shelf of the fridge.

My godmother's daughter is custodian  
of the biscuits. She's neat, petite and never  
touches them. Her complete Smurf village  
adorns the living room floor, dozens of plastic  
mushroom houses with elaborate domestic  
arrangements. She owns every Barbie luxury  
item known to girl-kind: Barbie Townhouse, Barbie  
Campervan, even the horse. A wardrobe  
full of dresses with the tags still on. And they fit.

So, I have to ask her mother. I know how  
she will react. The sigh, the pronounced roll  
of her eyes, the withering “I suppose so”  
and I will dive into the fridge and barely taste  
the biscuit, my face burning with shame. But  
I want it. And so, again, I gather myself  
from the deep, solid tap root of my will. The room  
becomes a tunnel and me the train. Iron and steam,  
don’t mess with me. I am learning something,  
later in life I will use it for more  
substantial things. I open my mouth.