

CHEMOTHERAPY by Anne Welsh

At the back of the kitchen drawer in Glasgow
I find five rolls of electrical tape –
three black, two blue – hoarded
post-retirement from the back of your BT van.

I want to swaddle your broken belly in them,

the way you wrapped the handle of my tennis racquet
to stop my hands from blistering
so I could beat all the boys in my class at school;

the way you staunched the blood of each
Stanley blade slice, every house rewire;

the way you taped back together
the teddy bears' picnic mobile that hung
from the hood of my pram. I want this

to be just one more graze from a careless screwdriver;
another ill-timed archery injury; I want there to be
enough tape left to insulate our world.

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