Ode to the Limpet

*after Percy Bysshe Shelley*

O tiny limpet, you of conical shell,
a frozen firework, a starburst in stone.
O you, variegated sand creature,
cast in carbonate, held fast

until the tide comes in.
When waves again cover
your rocky pool coast, you’re
a flurry of motion, scraping,
on the hunt. O you,
of algal carnage, your tongue
a conveyor belt of teeth

stronger than Kevlar.[1] O you,
“bulldozers of the seashore,”[2]
leavers of slimy
roadmaps to follow

when the tide ebbs.
Return to your home scar,
the indentation worn into rock
by your travels. O tiny limpet,
hold fast.


[2] Professor Steven Hawking, 2015

Other sources:
