

Royal

after James Tate

A battered photograph came through my letter box today
it was of me as the queen wearing a heavy duty crown.

It was definitely me, next to a man I didn't know
he didn't look like he knew me either,
but his medals were quite spectacular.

Looking strong had made my eyes water
and being important hurt my cheeks,
I don't think I'd ever even dreamed of this.

Or perhaps I did, on the windy top deck of a ferry
when I was six, running along smiling and then frowning,
holding onto my paper Burger King crown with both hands.