BRICKWORK

A red brick wall, framed
in timber beams and mortar,
collects the last gold of November warmth
on this lit morning.
It hasn't rested, though idle all these years.
A brick wall is stoic toil.
Compare one to your mother.

Or one afternoon, when an old lean-to
is removed from the back of a house,
check the darker patch left there
where sunshine did not abrade, and
consider the original
unfaded hue.

That colour is older than you.
That colour is the light from the same afternoon
as your father's father's birth.

On this corner, in this alley,
in short glimpses left
between plate glass and rolled steel, brickwork
still dogs us on our hurry to the places
we'll be meeting.
Stone-faced, it gazes on the circus
of weather. While the high-wires whistle, and gusts
trapeze between corporate blocks and a bare patch
of maples, it has composed
itself in an ordered frieze of dignity.
It wants nothing but to brace a roof
or front, three-quarters of a room.
It would like to stay there---
to be a kind of proof.