

## **Ben's Shed**

Clogged webs are slack-strung tennis nets;  
    convolvulus, frail horn-gramophones  
for bees. Weeds get to work. Leaf shadow frets  
the fogged glass. His ironclad mowing-machine,  
    tools, flat cap, wellingtons  
and, hunchbacked on its nail, his khaki gaberdine

expect him. In this narrow cell, familiar soil-  
    smells darken as if underground,  
grow tart like old coins or that shred of steel  
he took out of swaddling for me once: shrapnel  
    the surgeon picked from him, returned  
("You shouldn't be alive") as a memento. "Tell

me tell me." He'd no time, "The ground won't wait,  
    boy. Nights are drawing in." (August,  
bright sun outside.) In his hand he weighed  
a clutch of dried corms - hoarded, papery  
    shrunk hearts - the past  
and future sealed in them; held them to me.