

ACROSS THE STREET

The privet's a disappointment:

brown patches in the green,

so neatly clipped.

An excess of fertilizer,

much regretted,

and there's moss in the lawn – again.

Across the way,

grey hair hangs lank from crown to shoulders;

grass grows in the gravel of the garden path;

paint peels from the window frames,

while the bees in her hives make honey.

She longed for the teacher,

twill, tweed and brogues,

forgave him his pipe and deafness.

But he never asked

and she cooks on her Aga called Albert,

while the bees in her hives make honey.

Sucking hard and cupping his ear

he moved away,

possibly even married.

But she never asked,

and the roof trusses sag in the attic,
while the bees in her hives make honey.

Buddleia grows from the chimney bricks,
smoke filtering through the leaves
silent as a crematorium,
while the bees in her hives make honey.

By James Rose