

Rowan Middleton

After Gardening

I put away the secateurs and saws
and lock the shed. The leaves lie brown and wet
like tea dregs emptied from the pot. The sun
is low and windows gleam metallic orange.

A car horn blares from several streets away,
then someone's heating kicks itself awake.
I look across the newly sculpted trees
and see, between the medlar and the quince
a swirling column made of tiny flies.

And then, beyond the hedge, above the roofs
a magpie settles on the ash tree's tip,
its branches rocking into stillness. The sky
is clear. A flock of doves sweep overhead;
their wingbeats send a pulse into the air.

