

Kenneth

Mostly he is silent. But this morning his voice
shrills against the chaos of his kids:
some chore undone, some small transgression
spilt into the ocean of his wife's departure.
Later, unusually, we meet at the low hedge
between our places. He wields
a leaf blower against leaves fallen from
my plane tree. I have a rake. He hates me:
for my rake, for my trees, for his wife's betrayal.
His face is tight with the loss of her.
Unexpectedly, his machine jams.
Unexpectedly, out of the silence, I offer tea,
and now, though we have found little to say
as yet, he sits in the comfort of my yellow kitchen,
the hard warmth of a cup held in his too-soft palms.