

BUILDING

Not always recalled but never out of reckoning,
The clatter of wheels in old carriageways,
Sleigh runners shushing freshly fallen snow,
Comings of their goings, the smallest of gestures
Added up, compounded, and gently made hard
As the limestone they built with, sift of civic life
Bearing down in layers till heritage has weight.

And dignity rose from the Shambles and Market,
Over fire tumbled ruin the Doric columns lifted
Up the boisterous ceilings of plaster leaves and fronds,
A dream dome, a handcrafted grove of meditation,
And glaziers framed in stained glass memories
Of sappers and nurses, of sailors and home,
The lights of lives lived that illuminate living.

The sunburst chandelier hooked from the sky,
Brightening the chamber's deliberative circle,
Evokes not a fusion explosion but a flower,
A buttonbush flower, humble marsh dweller,
Native shrub going nova, easily overlooked,
White stamens on filaments out from the centre,
A floral globe bursting, only waiting to be seen.

From curlicued boot-scraper to weathervane's tip,
To Josh Milner, the builder's chiselled name,
From cells in the basement to clock tower bells,
Every nick and lick of paint in between,
All fashioned by people, devoted by hand
Above the old Shambles where water meets land,
A code carried forward that shows how to bloom.