**Poiesis**

David Jenkins

My pockets are stuffed. I’ve been

stealing flowers from my neighbors.

They hide, mouths closed, their sin

of hidden reticence I jauntily ignore

and time my theft by sprinklers

left to flood lawns, raising earth-

worms to writhe alone, disinterred

and unwilling to drown in sparse

leaves of grass. I steal flowers

in cool bone shadows beneath

ash trees, along hedges, my sour

neighbors sheltered in place, each

hour lost. Each of their hours lost.

How should we move through our

days, skittering closed-mouthed ghosts,

cleansed, breathless, hands scoured

twice, and again. The streets cleared,

the bars shuttered, kids sneak out and

watch my grizzled neck dip into feared

beds. They keep their distance, chant

fie and fall, fie and fall, with reasons

of their own, and skate off, rattled by

my raised fist, my gaunt gaze, stones

hefted to throw. I stumble and sigh

into my beard, reach and tear loose

petals, blossoms, and stuff my pockets.

How should we move, our day’s excuse

alive with reckless old men, feckless

and serene in neighbors’ gardens,

refusing refuge, the solitude of death’s

inept loneliness no longer held end-

less and tight, our poor lives bereft

without flowers to steal, and grim

without pockets to brim.