

Kestle was a place I never grew tired of

he said as slowly we walked the lane
his stick tap-tapping until, pausing
he raised it and pointed to the barn
its tall doors where the wagons
would pull in, piled high with turnips
harvested before the frost.

We stood outside the farmhouse
its granite smudged in autumn mist
Granny Lyne was born up there
his grey eyes deepened as he smiled
Some used to say there's greener grass
but I was happy here.

Beyond turfed stone hedge – drawn by
the half-fallen tree, its lichened boughs
heavy with fruit – his arm brushed mine
That apple tree, he's as old as me
he said, laughter catching his throat
and that's saying something.