

Duncan Darbshire

That Was Then

Legs less limber, he walks the fells
In his head, sees things as they were,
Remembers trees now fallen, walls gone.
Where there was a path is bracken,
Chest high and laced with bramble,
Pasture is bog, fields scrub.

He thinks his way down to the beck
And climbs the fence, can almost smell
The sausages baked in the fire
His mother made, taste the cold water.
The brown stones in the river bed
Are still slippery and hurt his feet.

And he can hear the raven call
As it sheds air from its wings
And falls whirling from a crag.
His collie nuzzles at his hand
And he strokes it's head,
Takes a deep breath and smiles.

But that was then, and now
He puts the kettle on, makes tea,
Retrieves a biscuit from its tin,
Puts his feet up by the fire,
Gets out his iPad, opens Kindle,
And escapes from reality.