**Mother/Son**

You’ve shrunk now and I loom over you,

a middle-aged son, your ribs thin

under my fingers as I hug

your hunched torso. Your hair’s still dark,

but the face it frames is sunk with age,

lids sagging over rheumy eyes.

Islands of sun-damaged skin colonise

your forehead. ‘It’s just old age’

you tell me when I ask if you’ve seen

a doctor. Almost daily you ring -

when are we coming round,

when are we on holiday - writing it down

then ringing back, the details leaking

away like water through a broken gutter.

Hugh Dunkerley