Poems January 2010

Kynde knowynge

by N.S. Thompson

If I could meet a shepherd and I heard
Him speaking in the fourteenth century
Some Cotswold dialect and every word
Dropped richly on the landscape’s tapestry

Of fierce grass woven onto limestone soil
—Yes, rich and fecundating in its way
And earthy, a vocabulary of toil—
And I could understand what he should say

When looking at that antique leather face
Smelling wool hides and fells, what would I know?
Hearing each syllable and every case
Correct, what would I know, what wolde ich knowe?

N.S. Thompson’s long poem addressed to W. H. Auden is forthcoming from Smokestack Books.