**Tissue**

Paper that lets the light

shine through, this

is what could alter things.

Paper thinned by age or touching,

the kind you find in well-used books,

the back of the Koran, where a hand

has written in the names and histories,

who was born to whom,

the height and weight, who

died where and how, on which sepia date,

pages smoothed and stroked and turned

transparent with attention.

If buildings were paper, I might

feel their drift, see how easily

they fall away on a sigh, a shift

in the direction of the wind.

Maps too. The sun shines through

their borderlines, the marks

that rivers make, roads,

railtracks, mountainfolds,

Fine slips from grocery shops

that say how much was sold

and what was paid by credit card

might fly our lives like paper kites.

An architect could use all this,

place layer over layer, luminous

script over numbers over line,

and never wish to build again with brick

or block, but let the daylight break

through capitals and monoliths,

through the shapes that pride can make,

find a way to trace a grand design

with living tissue, raise a structure

never meant to last,

of paper smoothed and stroked

and thinned to be transparent,

turned into your skin.

IMTIAZ DHARKER