

Martin Robertson

[Housman was old beyond his years]

Housman was old beyond his years
knowing at twenty
the fleeting seasons in their beauty
would not again appear
often enough. At sixty
that's something all of us can see.

For Housman, spring's whitening
—fair enough.
One can't do better for a love,
but each of us to bless him
has, in whatever season,
a flower-love that seems his own.

I love white spring, love the colours
of autumn, but
my sweetheart-flower these have not:
childheart (while the swallow
settles down, the cuckoo's
voice breaks) hedge-reborn, the rose.