

# Two Poems

**C.C. Reid**

## **Second Marriage**

Mortar joints are intended  
to be sacrificial, sensitive  
toward the needs of historic  
brick and stone. Slaked  
lime and local sand  
destroy a structure  
if overly strong. Analysis  
requires interpretation. Repointing  
restores physical and visual  
integrity, or detracts  
and damages the masonry:

Mortar as bedding  
rather than glue,  
pigmented by lampblack,  
brickdust, oystershells,  
coral sands and locks of hair.  
The joint is tooled  
when thumbprint hard  
to match existing bonds.  
New construction bloom  
fades through normal  
weathering.

River-rounded sand,  
free from impurities,  
a handful is part void  
between the grains. Good mortar  
fills each emptiness. And vines  
weigh down one corner  
of the building, vines  
planted by another.  
I say they'll drag  
the whole wall down. You  
swear they hold it up.

## Self-Taught

there's a radial arm saw in our family my father  
gave my brother headed north looking for land  
with his lover and child I remember my great-  
grandfather Charlie balancing a pool cue on the  
two-and-a-half fingers making his left hand how  
winter came and he didn't have shoes for school  
and a teacher gave him her old pair a kindness too  
big too pretty too essential to be squandered you  
can't get back the things you needed when you  
had them the man who raised my father took the  
safety off to best cut teak candlesticks that burned  
the first time I tried candlelight a good case for  
precious metals better hand-me-downs what hap-  
pened to his missing fingers I know without ask-  
ing—in our family you pick them up yourself