Tempus fugit, memento mori

by Tony Dawson in the February 8, 2011 issue

The second hand seemed to tremble on the edge
of motion when I was young, like a diver
poised with suppliant arms, paused in momentary
stillness before secretly shifting his weight

forward, opening to the instant
gravity and air. But after half a century
my seconds and minutes are long forgotten
casualties, and weeks months years disappear

like pressed flowers crushed by fingers no longer
precise and nimble. And yet behind my back
each day still stretches feline in the brightness
of my memory, bee-song somnolent

without eagerness for the moment around
the corner. And when night arrives, curtained
and padded or hard like a crucifix,
nubilous as obsidian or moonlight-silver,

I will stand trembling on its edge with suppliant
arms and just enough time for one last dive.