

DAVID JACOBS

MR CORNELIUS COMES DOWNSTAIRS

Down his carpeted stairs wades Mr Cornelius, drumming
Their hollowness with every step. He is coming
To inspect the world on a summer's afternoon, on a day
Without clouds, with a Cambridge blue sky.

Outside, he notices too many cars are unwashed
And rusting, and he has to boot some cardboard
From the pavement to the gutter. Give him any time
His luxury kitchen and re-papered rooms,

The proud exterior last summer he painted white,
Holding his seniority for a fortnight
On a borrowed ladder, missing nothing, glad
Of the questions which the cornice posed,

And which, next summer, he is planning to re-run
Like a televised goal, if possible take on
The low front wall in which he sees, he is saying
Tributaries from the mainstream cracks advancing.