**The Ideal**

By James Fenton

This is where I came from.

I passed this way.

This should not be shameful

Or hard to say.

A self is a self.

It is not a screen.

A person should respect

What he has been.

This is my past

Which I shall not discard.

This is the ideal.

This is hard.

From *Yellow Tulip Poems 1968-2011* (Faber and Faber, 2012).