

Two Lads Demolish A Brick Shed In Next-Door's Back Garden While I Work From Home

One of the lads has brought a sledgehammer
and the other has brought nothing.

The one with the sledgehammer is older
and in charge. He stands facing the shed,
the sledgehammer leaning against his leg.
He points at the shed. The younger lad nods.
The shed is still mostly standing, its slate roof
sprinkled across the lawn in many pieces.
This is the afternoon of the third day.

Sometimes the younger lad makes a grab
for the sledgehammer, and the older lad
shakes his head, a warning; lays his hand on it: *no,
the sledgehammer is for me only: if you'd wanted one
you should've brought your own, shouldn't you?*

I just want to see the older one heft it,
plant his two feet in the turf and swing it
before my next Zoom call. I got through
the entire last meeting, a whole two hours,
without saying a single word. I grip the computer mouse
like it's a rock. I want to see the shed crumple
into an ex-shed, then close the blinds
while they fetch a wheelbarrow. The older lad points
at the shed. The younger one nods. Shakespeare
would've cast these two as clowns, I think.
It's nearly lunchtime. None of the work I have ever done
has ever meant anything.