

## **The Arc of the Fall**

*Mansehra, Pakistan*

*by Joe Lapp*

This morning as I walked  
I saw a curious sight: bricks  
thrown by unseen hands  
from a pile on the ground  
to a pile on the roof, or what  
perhaps would be a second floor,  
of a half-built building,  
each brick rising with grace  
into the blue air at the top  
of the compound wall, tumbling  
slightly in a shortened parabola,  
one after the other, to land  
with a clink on the concrete above.

His body hidden behind a wall,  
I had to imagine the hands  
of the thrower, their clarity  
of purpose, their sure goodwill  
as they chose a brick, weighed  
it, then lofted it high  
with practiced ease.

I feel like that brick  
sometimes, thrown by unseen hand –  
of God, perhaps, or of my will –  
to a higher plane, landing amongst  
other bricks chipped from the arc  
of the fall, and who can know  
whether the wall we build  
will be straight or crooked,  
will last or crumble.