

The Bridge Builder

David Atwood

The last time I shook Julian White's hand
was at Home Depot on the hardware row,
when he told me about the first time he felt
the pain in his stomach on a plane to Chicago.

The man who could captivate a year
of bone-tired students with elation
about ancients who built monuments
with no more guide than twig and twine.

With a voice that bounced like jazz
and handshake that knocked down walls,
he exposed the skin and bones of people
in the stones and spaces they built.

His human scale showed students the soul
of the Architect, then invited us inside.
Twine and twig can build a cenotaph,
Julian White built a bridge.

*Julian T. White was the first African American professor at LSU
and the second licensed African American Architect in Louisiana*