

## Old Wounds

Marian Christie

When they stripped the ivy from the oak, he could see  
the scar - the trunk's flesh peeled away  
to expose deep tissue, fibre pale as bone  
where a limb was ripped by lightning  
    forty years ago.

Perhaps the oak had welcomed concealment,  
the stranglehold of ivy, green  
through all the seasons, all the years.  
Watching from his bed the play of light  
    and shade, he pondered

how memories abide in trees - he recalled  
thorns like bone needles, neatly paired,  
glinting through the silver green of leaves;  
the fissured texture of the bark;  
    seedpods, pendulous

as crescent moons; and how fiercely that day  
he had focussed on the acacia, its details,  
so that he did not have to look  
at what was on the ground, nor at the vultures  
    above, in holding patterns.