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Entropy at Hartburn

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The Elderberry and red-berried Ash, not here,
in the North’s summer dense with shades. Do they
grow in us; do ourselves form on theirs? The Oak’s
rooted head branches joy with leaves close as wood-grain
with between them birds numerous as mustard grain.
Not here. And yet here, even so, the passions of form.
I need you. Who else, who else but you?
the huge strong soft presence with roots; robust
musical presence
your shape of noise ghostly
with permanence: Tree.

Entropy at Hartburn / Jon Silkin

Between the hoof’s cleft loam squeezes; so beasts enter nightfall. Steamy presences; the dunged breaths falter.
Hartburn divides night on itself
with a shutter. 'Mildred clamp out the dark.' Cream lace
embroiders its holes.

The huge energies untwine, and stars
slither away on the braids. The wagging stems
of sex slather to inane fruitfulness.

Not a thing to comfort us. The holy’s fruit
taps at the church’s stained glass
where solstice clenches its day,

and small energies out-thorn, the profusion
of winter at mid-night.

The Holy Island of St. Aidan / Jon Silkin

Primitive light streaks the sky.

Lindisfarne: wreckers clang their matins
and shine the guided light; the sea gulps.

Dawn lowers its leaden rose, the negative
sinks in the developer’s tray. If men
are pierced by want

Holiness conceives murder. Midsummer
storms the sea and the hulk under
the long shook rope of waves

surges on Northumbria’s teeth.
Mortal things. The flop, the cracking of them. Day
wipes clean that slate. The mild castle,

church, priory laced with Ionan
leaf, chevron, and the stone grape
smile to the sea. Mortal things.

The moon in its system, the connections snapping.