

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.