

flexed your blood in its knees,
kicked your curbstone
with its pragmatic boot,
stared like a horn-rimmed astronomer
through the goggles of your eyes.
Fiercely, one night,
forcing itself out
through the knuckle of your first finger,
it lay there panting on the paper like a beast.
It was winglike. With one whiff
you could have blown it away forever.
But who then would have mourned it
in its wanderings? And it came from you,
and was your risk. Traitor pity
said you must adopt it. Traitor love
told you to feed it with wishes.
Secretly you made it your own, by choice.

Shades / Jon Silkin

Cheviot: makes silence of
life's bare soft maximum,

fluxing not much. No, hangs

its milky fluid in
Henhole's vacancy; plump

bellies of cinquefoil mixed
with the Barren Strawberry ooze

their lobed flesh at the cleft
Cheviot turns into;

and through the soft
crushed odours, what trees?

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.