

ruined in the bud

GRIFFIN PLAAG

the ashy willow sleeping in the corridor
between the green-tongued brambles of the yard
has stumbled into slumbered pitfalls

dreams
or something like them,
little shadows of a bud all
droll and dark and damp
and free beneath the tree,
buried 'neath the tree's parsimony.

i throw a nut and
crack the copal vine;
the tree recoils.

the stuttered stores of apples
upturned in the sandy soil of the
drive accuse the driver of infractions 'neath
the corrugated tower. they suppurate and glower
from the dust. you count the hours with
a sundial.

and your tires crack the ground –
O! to have found the blossomed bedside
in the womby purple chamber!
the wheels churn in iron sockets;
the sun glows amber.
and you crumble over shells,
and the ashy willow stirs from slumber,
shakes the sleep from its knobby eyes,
waxes nitric in the lightning wind
and sees you on the hessian land –
your hessian feet now serve some other master
than the weeping fronds,

the cranberry husks now bubble in the
drying bog
and burst!

the fabric flutters and before your eyes
the willow's felled.

so like the branches draped with hessian hair,
you droop and wilt and falter. the tree
does not collapse, but disappears. the threads
retied by roots you thought too deep to be
upended are unlaced. they dangle there
and twilight shadows whisper
through the brambles and the bugs
and the faintest whiff of resin:
there was no ashy willow here.