

## THE WORD-HEDGE

It prods and then resists me, this memory—  
Remember crossing fens  
And dales  
And meadows tossing with poppies and wrens  
Toward a great tree?  
Its massive limbs cradling  
Skulls and nightingales  
That sang of all that was  
And was to be.  
These I dimly see—  
In long wind-flattened grass  
The apples lay,  
A long-haired lass  
At play—  
But long since the winds and rains have blown  
And driven  
Me past lakes and hills unknown.  
This early tree I've striven  
To portray—  
Yet say all I can say  
My words bristle crossly like a hedge  
And will not let me back there.  
The word-hedge stands  
Anciently thick with thorn,

With common bud and bird and horn  
That in the sighing mist  
Insist  
That they  
Are what I'm trying to say,  
That they in my dark heart have hung  
Tapestries from when the world was young.  
I cannot fit my knowing through  
Into that land that I once knew.