

THEY VISIT THE CYPRESS TREE

You would think, given
the violence still in evidence here,
that these children would not giggle
and waggle their tongues, swept up
in vibrations beyond this sad place
where four died one moonless night.
Friends of the dead, they have come
to see the savaged earth where wheels plowed
and the tree that caught the car
and formed it to its trunk like a lovers' union,
so odd in that consummation: machine
and tree, and trapped between them the dead.
They are thinking of a world beyond all this,
where death is abstract and distant.
They do not comprehend that kingdom
where their friends have gone
nor sense the depth of despair
in their parents' shimmering eyes
as they study dark stains in the dust
and pieces of plastic and chrome.
The scarred cypress, which must have been
shaken to its roots, starts its early healing,
its branches embracing the wind and the sky.