

ARBORESCENCE

some people grow into trees
after adolescence
comes arborescence

cankers grow
bark splits
limbs break and fall

their beauty is not in their souls
but in their form
their silhouette

standing straight and tall
as poplars beside a road
or crowded together in a wood
all elbows and knees
or like trees in parkland
single specimens to be admired

or like crab apple trees in old orchards
where children sit
like woodland sprites
picking the sour fruit
tossing it down
swinging their legs
peeping through the leaves

like dead souls
mocking the bodies
they once inhabited

Neil Rathmell