

## Climbing Trees

Soft as tissue paper the tree smiles.  
 Phil tells me how many trees he's climbed  
 Me, I've never climbed a tree  
 And that is what my life lacks.  
 I am all hugging trees but he is climbing the tree  
 Scaling and ascending up up into the blue air  
 Why is the air always blue, probably isn't, you know  
 Up into the Turneresque air  
 Now look how I try to make a poem of it  
 But Phil has simply climbed the tree  
 And this is what my life lacks  
 I would like him to climb more trees in our front room  
 We must install more, and we do today  
 A Rowen an Oak and an Ash  
 A Willow, the Willow tree is special  
 The nearest I ever got to climbing a tree  
 And this is what my life has lacked.  
 In the dream my hands and arms work again  
 I cheer I laugh to see my beautiful hands again  
 Beauty is in the eye of the beholder  
 I have never held a bee, I have never climbed a tree  
 And this is what my life has lacked.  
 And Phil is tall as a tree  
 And stretches up up into the atmosphere  
 As if he is flying a kite  
 As if he is in Mary Poppins

As if he is a magical hare  
 As if he is a fox climbing tree  
 As if he is a white sliced bread  
 Toasted like on a old galley train  
 And we will climb and climb  
 And the tree will be wonderful  
 What we build in the tree, soft wonderful tree,  
 The things you can hide in the tree  
 And this is Monroe, the tree is an eagle  
 The tree is a Rowan, all singing all dancing  
 And still Phil climbs  
 And he reaches a hand down to me  
 Gives me a hand up and I follow him up the tree  
 The tree beyond words of beauty  
 The tree that I have lacked, he gives me back,  
 He gives me back  
 That tree that tree he gives me back so many trees  
 I lose count of them  
 And him self walking in a forest  
 Not caring but always daring  
 A magician tree, a Phil tree  
 My tree of always  
 And now I finally get to climb that tree

## Flowers by the Roadside

As if to mask death a bunch of Dahlias  
 Is pinned to a tree  
 They look like another accident  
 They look like a murmured apology  
 There a dedication to the person who put them there  
 Small children gather and parents put  
 Tulips in their hands  
 This could be the wrong place.  
 This is the wrong place.  
 Snails, rabbits, birds chew and grizzle  
 At the so called tokens  
 This is a white world full of nothing  
 And no one's thoughts  
 This is borrowed death growing by the minute  
 A limbo of meaningless crap  
 The kids do not understand,  
 But they know more than the parents.  
 There are no victims  
 We are all running in our own race  
 Can you name the bullet, can you name the spot  
 Nothing too bad happens if you hear Vivaldi!  
 The Easter bunny drips chocolate onto  
 Little Mary's arm  
 What is death Mama, what is death Papa  
 A rose by any other name should not be left here.

The world would be broken and smaller  
 If one only flight would be baffled and weary  
 My own wings hanging unused  
 My own soul held under water by a dark stone  
 The scent of jasmine gone from my hair  
 The wild lilia no longer adrift  
 The crushed butterfly at my parents grave  
 A mystery of remembered truth  
 A bell that does not sound  
 A cloud whose name is freedom  
 Left to languish in my heart  
 A burden begun when there was none  
 A mountain top and no way to ascend  
 A lover's picture speaks to myself  
 But the language and the words undone  
 If I had never seen the butterfly  
 What reason to say the brutal act of wisdom  
 That greets tomorrow...  
 As if I were a bird of wonder  
 Of innocence, of captured joy  
 If I had never seen the butterfly  
 Invent

## If I had never seen a butterfly

Helping the world,  
 one micro-chapbook at a time....

www.origamipoems.com  
 origamipoems@gmail.com

Cover: Profile by Helen Burke  
 over photo by Jan Keough

Origami Poetry Project™

Climbing Trees  
 Helen Burke © 2016

•

Every Origami micro-chapbook may be  
 printed from the website.

Donations appreciated



## The Trees at the Cemetery

In their defence I will say this.  
 They see us, even though we do not see them.  
 We trudge with our watering cans and lilies  
 And our memories  
 – and we see and understand nothing.  
 We do not see their strange and living shapes –  
 How they move and dart in the wind.  
 How they are undefeated by the stars.  
 Their sweet and pleasant journey in the air.  
 We are prisoners of a different vision. We climb a  
 Different mountain. We do not hear the melody,  
 That rich and haunting tune.  
 But they see us. Hear us.  
 We look – and look away. Such fools we are.  
 Even when they keep the sky from falling on our heads  
 We do not see though the long grass, how they keep  
 Our feet from falling.  
 No.  
 Only the shadows that are visible we see, as damaged  
 And unmendable, they fall across our path.

The deep roots that cross from grave to grave,  
 That almost could de-rail us.  
 This is what we see.  
 When we leave,  
 We do not see the arms around that wave,  
 Nor the green richness,  
 The driving beauty of this meadow.  
 We do not hear the song of hope  
 That always they gather in –  
 Nor with each Spring how gladly they return –  
 Are Kings and Queens of blossom.  
 We do not see them.  
 But, always, they see us.