

The Spitter

It's hard not hate people
-sometimes,
only sometimes,
when they spit
on the ground
at your feet.

*The essence of a scoundrel
in a puddle,
my mother says.*

A white calling card on concrete.

Is he too repulsed by his insides
to keep them inside?

Walk on.

This book belongs to

He opens the book
ready to sign his name,
claim it as his own.

She has gotten there before him.

*Also called the
outsider, I think
you might like it
and its rancorous tone
I love you!
xxx
Jenny*

He closes it
gently.

It is hers.

The Love Tree

There's a tree we call the Love Tree.
It has a name, unlike the ground
it sprang from. It has always been
the Love Tree to us who do not own it.

Look closely at the skin. Look!
There are more than wrinkles there.
More rings than Saturn can boast. Rings
on his fingers and bluebells

at his toes. Or so it goes.
Numbers, figures etched into the walls
of the wooden attic. The spread reaching
sunwards, tattooed.

Read it. Numbers, figures, letters
of love. L 4 L, i love u, Benjamin loves...
Is Benjamin not sure?
Benjamin's love has gone to seed.

These cartouches have set in
like a disease. They call it fever.
The correct term is vain vandalism.
It is a sickness, all the same.

Angry lovers, stark-faced and bruised,
too delicate for tattoos. They carve
these gargoyles of fancy, dig out hieroglyphs
of passion. A declaration of something.

They come in the night,
two by two, torches, rope, steady hand
to scale the heights of love's cliff face.
Quercus robur: the object of satiation.

We gaze at this graffiti of adoration
until the light goes and the dog whines.
We will come back with a pen knife
we don't mind blunting,

when we have given ourselves
to each other, thunder hot,
ravenous enough to scratch into each other,
sear our declarations into skin.