

The Patience of an Oak

by Alfred J. Petrowske

I cut a dead branch from an oak tree,
Being careful to leave the surrounding ring.
The wound was grievous,
Being about four inches in diameter.

So I watched it slowly close;
It grew in from both sides,
Rather than from the entire circumference.

Each year brought more progress
Until the entire area of the injury
Was covered over with new bark,
A vertical line marking the final closure
After a period of eight years.

A neighboring oak to this one
Had been shorn of its protective cover
Of neighboring trees.
It stood stark and bare
Except for its upper crown,
Until, little by little,
It sprouted a branch here and a sprig there.

Now it stands completely decked
With green leaves.
This also took the same period
Of about eight years of time.

They tell me that trees can indeed communicate
With each other and, if so,
These can now do so more respectably.

But oh, the patience of an oak.

*And oh, the patience of the man
Who watched the oak!

*This line added by the typist, who knows the author well.