

Initials Carved on A Cemetery Oak (A Villanelle)

In the cracked crust of an aging oak, penknife scratched in a cordate shell,
Five capital letters tattooed in the bark; does A.P still Love G.D?
Through the tangled bones of four funerals, buried where acorns fell.

In the lost back-to-backs where kisses were stolen, furtive fingers held,
A feathered shaft, struck through a love-heart, struck diagonally,
In the cracked crust of an aging oak, penknife scratched in a cordate shell.

And now as neighbours, so close they might touch, graves laid parallel,
A legend carved, their love consummated, in the solitude of a cemetery,
Through the tangled bones of four funerals, buried where acorns fell.

And friends and paramours and secrets, clandestine moments, an anonymous hotel,
A room and a bed on a weekday afternoon G.D shared; love with A.P,
In the cracked crust of an aging oak, penknife scratched in a cordate shell.

Their limbs, now disturbed, roots, twisting through loam, caressing beneath the soil,
Ghostly kisses blown and returned, and now a forgotten, deceased memory,
Through the tangled bones of four funerals, buried where acorns fell.

Two headstones chiseled from black marble, the epitaphs do not tell,
That the scar cut deep in the bark still bleeds,
In the cracked crust of an aging oak, penknife scratched in a cordate shell.
Through the tangled bones of four funerals, buried where acorns fell.

By Joe Reynolds