

Request

Since many are woodland species, they thrive in creating
a thick wall of foliage as they vie for light. (Irish Times, 2017)

This summer when I won't be there
send me the hedges

their flowering faces
in images, I mean

the way you can draw expression
from commonest features

and I'll put words to them:
the marginal, last-left places

for something to live in: anything,
shielded from larger forces.

I was just starting to make
acquaintance with name and likeness

springing to their defence, and find
a world away now

and years stripped by,
I can't let go of the process

nor be in both minds
at once.

Cannot accept the loss
of cover, of forest

unless I salvage
what keeps to the corners

with all else laid waste,
pushed back, bare-root adapting

as I do, to each new condition.
Yes, I've known buttercup

hawthorn, herb-robert
but still I want more and close-up:

buckthorn and spindle
dogrose and hazel

"vying for light" to create
the natural barrier, slighter

but better than wall, each element,
little and liminal,

won't take much space, the odd
moment you think of it / or don't,

whatever you wouldn't look twice at,
I'm asking for.

Tracy Ryan

(H)edges

Unnatural remnant
as if all life were
refuge to numberless
visible, which may be
esteem them,
the eye desires
Cutters hoe through
naked ends of limbs
throwing up hands at us.
damage, but why do
the tussle of those who
only poor visibility
roads. For some humans,
competition. This
of resentment, oppression,
a thought remains for
hedgerows. A grudge
expansion, assumption
Why not with delicacy
your own home –
You'll only see them
that hot, overwhelming
is a large part
Photograph them
without figure, but look closer:
Learn to read them.
that adds to the hatred
them, ancient tales of barrier
and it's true they're meant
They harbour and cover

become so crucial
banked at the edges,
creatures, not all
why people don't
barriers to view when
to be all-roaming,
and lay waste to them,
once sinuous, purposeful,
Legacy, yes, of earlier
more of it? Here too
protect and others who say
on already narrow
anything upright is
is no historic memory
enclosure – barely
what was there before
at any hindrance to self-
the world is in the way.
the care you'd show
it is your own home.
right on foot: that hurtle,
forward engine
of the problem.
and it may seem all ground
mille-fleurs – the image teeming.
Rebarbative, and perhaps
some dredge up to slash
and hurdle, enemy, impediment
to inhibit large movement.
the small, the going-about

of own business, shelter some
Nests only tenuous to humans,
viewpoint which we seem
for even

resent as buffer on freedom.
well-shielded from their own
incapable of taking on
a moment.

Tracy Ryan