

Before the Word is Spoken We Reach Each Other

Jarrett Arnold

I saw a tree for the first time
today in your smile as we—soft—
touched his skin together.
We had hurried by a thousand times unmoved!
You were perched upon my elbow
your eyes big with life
and I realized you might like
a closer look.
From root to bud we ran his course
together one atom at a time.
Then from green trembling leaves
through his lean boughs into
his trunk where white and
brown draw chaotic scenes
and finally back to the roots
where he sucks earth unseen.
And for the first time in a score
and ten I stand upon real ground.
and taste life's illusion and hear wind's sound.
You look at me laughing four teeth, and
I see myself
beneath that tall old tree.
You turn back still shiny and
place your chubby little hand upon
the bark while your other rests quietly on my chest.
and I love.
When I hold you close, my heart can finally rest free.
We stand there all three
under the first tree
to ever speak to me.
and I understand.