

The Bedford Oak

Circa 1500

A tree speaks only for itself —
No gossip, no historian
With records ranked upon a shelf —
Its auditor, attentive man.

Four centuries and somewhat more,
Unchallenged owner of the field,
It has observed both peace and war,
Its branches leaped, its deep roots sealed.

If it has any words to say,
Newcomers to its sacred land
Should pause in silence and there pray
For ears and hearts to understand,

And, better still, to emulate
This ancient prophet so alive,
So master of his own estate
And so determined to survive.

J. de G. H.