

Shade Tree

After the funeral
my sister walked me
into Mom's backyard
where a black walnut sapling
dug into the Iowa dirt
and reached up
with all five of its leaves.

"Mom thought a squirrel planted it last fall.
She wanted you to have it,"
my sister said.
Now, thirty years later,
I sit with my coffee
under its shading arms
as she whispers in the morning breeze.

by Arlin Buyert