

Warning: Dangerous Tree

says the sign tacked to a barbed wire fence
as if the singular anger of a pollarded old oak
could be contained months after it passed on

as if the wrath of a mass plantation shackled
by stanchions and slipped into plastic tubes
could be excused, as if the rage of the lonely

front garden acer could be easily explained,
as if you could justify the lopped off limbs
of an ash desperate to bridge a tarmac span

or the indignity of topiary inflicted on yew,
cropped into outsize lollipops and peacocks,
as if being labelled *scrub* or *urban furniture*

weren't enough or the slavery of being unable
to escape the chainsaw, the pain of being
stubbed and dehorned, your crown hat-racked

and topped, pruned wounds sun-scalded,
and invaded, plagued by pests and disease,
as if a tree didn't already hold enough rain