

Once I Was A Tree

shucking off my dirty husk, springing up
impulsive as a back-garden ash-plant,
sapling burgeoning from a cracked path

or a self-sown oak on the Common, wild
and ferocious, the music of growing
all of my own.

Instead, you cuddled me
in a *peat-free growing medium*, inhibition
calibrated to *an optimum moisture range*,

cotyledons kept misted, stem perfectly
perpendicular to qualify for an Avenue
Creation Exercise.

Then you stepped up
protection, two stakes to keep me in place,
chicken-wired and Q-coded for fortification.

My roots clutch at the aggregates of life,
rubber crumb topping a solid finish for
pedestrian traffic.

I'm grateful but it's left
me unhuggable, half-way between hearth
and gutter, *green infrastructure*, with a tube

to keep me watered. Too tall and the axe
falls when I'm deemed to be *a potential
public hazard*,

my aging limbs laborious
to maintain. When the traffic noise dies,
the wind is indistinguishable from a sigh.