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The broken willow

by *C.H. Sisson*

It was an old willow with a dark
Hawthorn bush underneath its leaning stem.
(The bush was dark not because of shadow
But from the rustling silver of the willow

Poring over it like an attentive head.)
Over the stile and to the river-side
I went to examine this conjunction.
It was no girl poring over a lover

Or comforting a child dark but her own.
It was an old broken sexless thing
Which time had ripped open and its tubes
Kings and soft places open in their rot,

Yet more like a circuit than a man,
A control panel with the cover off,
Saving a natural grace, a contentment
Of ruin sinking into renewed life.

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