

A Walk through Blenheim

Karen Kelsay

Across the field, a partial hedgeline planted
three hundred years ago still winds its way
between an ancient English oak and plum.
At sunset, their silhouettes turn granite-gray,

revealing several spheres of mistletoe,
displayed like ornaments, in higher boughs.
Their filigreed twigs take on a ruby tint.
In wintertime, sparse greenery allows

a view of zigzag branches, errant arms
extending over broken walls. The damp
and barren limbs against the muted scene;
December's light hangs like a shaded lamp,

illuminating what the summer's hidden:
the undergirding, ridged and gnarled and dark,
a mass of wood, an artwork in itself,
three centuries of weathered, aging bark.

Then, I recall your picture as a youth,
the flawless skin, your fragile spirit, how
I never saw the strength beneath your charms,
until a later season would allow.