

Leaves at Night

by Charles Simic

Talking to themselves, digressing, rambling on—
Or is it a tête-à-tête we are overhearing?
A flutter of self-revelations, a gust of recriminations
With the moon slipping in and out of the clouds.

A half-mad oak tree affronted by nature's conduct,
The vagaries of New England weather.
The foolish adoration of every skimpy ray of sunlight,
Or some other disturbing truth?

A mock-heroic farce being played in whispers.
The tree as the hanging judge, the tree as the accused.
Windy night squabble followed by a long hush
As they wait anxiously for our applause.

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