

THE DYING BRANCH

Beached with the bladderwrack,
crab carapace and starfish husk,
I spurn the sand's false promise
of a rooted permanence I knew
when nourished by my mother oak.
I lie among the discards and the dead,
counting the weaker tides and longing
for the full moon's flood,
the new wave's rasping kiss.

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At first the ocean bathed my weeping scar
and doused the terror in my heart
until the insistent swell fed me the truth:
no root, no soil -just breathing space
before obliteration to lament the gale
that tore me from the tree
and curse the cruelty of riddling
germ and fungus, bug and worm
beneath my bark.

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Perhaps a higher consciousness
than mine can see a purpose in it all.
My waning fibres only sense
the universal round of birth and growth,
decline and death
and my small place
within the mindless whirl

as I disintegrate into the mould

that feeds the carousel.

Bryan Harbottle 24.03.08