

The Shape of Death

By Judith Bernstein

Death gives the branches many shapes.

Some stretch sideways over the cliff

As if to breathe a strong whiff

Of meadow flowers below.

Others twist and turn, entwine.

A few snatch at the living,

Reach for their lush green juices

Or sidle up to absorb their strength.

What shape has death given you?

The shape of shadows glimpsed

Through a glass darkly,

The insubstantial shape of soul.

The round shape of life, too

Circle dance of memory,

Reflections cast on my life's pond.

Your fleshless shape sits

Companionably beside me

While birds sing snatches of your song

In the twisted branches reaching out for life.

