

## THE TREE IN THE ROCK

It appears out of nowhere  
along the approach to the priory  
painstakingly restored  
in the nineteenth century.  
Petrified in rock yet alive.  
Further down a fish with discoloured back  
resists the flow of the clattering  
river curling around a moment in history  
on its way from the fells to the sea.

Fierce sun and dappled shade.  
A wedding party in progress;  
we edge away from the photographs.  
On the way back up the hill  
we see the writhing tree again,  
its thick limbs in the sandstone  
trapped yet dominant; its animal  
properties apparent, significant.  
Is that a face? Irresistible Instagram.

It must be. The spirit. So many  
raids and incursions, myths,  
legends, to be deciphered  
and released, if only we had the key.

***Greg Freeman***

