



## The Oak

grief comes  
as held breath in a country of heavy lungs

oh what a faulty time  
in a nation cut open

we are alive

let us show our incision  
to a compassionate needle

let us suture

let us write this next part in careful ink

in a TikTok  
lightning strikes an oak

opens a window  
to its burning whorl

heartwood

someone in comments calls it a hellmouth  
the tree's still alive

still slowly growing its leaves still green  
respiration continues & bark

xylem draws new water in  
at its taproot

a nation wounded

someone in comments argues  
the oak is a metaphor for modern America

I argue  
stop doomscrolling

the oak is much older

take the wound outside

show it to the sun

— Lynne Ellis

