

Daphne Laurī (Daphne of the Laurel)

the laurel tree stands,

her canopy bows in shame

her roots grip the soil with anger

her skin is mutilated

not by axe or knife,

No

but by the lustful claws

of the golden god,

poisoned by the arrow of desire,

who pursued her

over root and bramble

creek and bog

tripping,

staggering,

until her body gave in

but she would not let him have it,

No.

she would weather anything but that.

she called out to her father

to change her body

from one that was so desired

and he did.

but the god did not relent,

No.

he caressed her rough skin  
as she drew away  
from his corrupt embrace  
and made her leaves for ever green.  
her body would forge his weapons,  
his instruments  
his crown

No.

Now the laurel stands on the bank  
of the river of her father  
with tears of sap dried on her face  
arms, suffocated by greenery,  
outstretched towards the river.  
The only thing that remained as it was  
is her heart, thumping  
against the wooden cage;  
ruby rivers flow amber  
as her ruined heart falls still.

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