

Tree of Heaven - Port Townsend

The Chinese Tree of Heaven
that grows beside my house
climbed a cliff to get there.

Now it waits for a silkworm
to sail up the Sound
and lend it a cocoon.

It waves to every passing
sail, each white tuft
that might be the silkworm.

For the Chinese Tree of Heaven
without a silkworm of its own
is only the weed tree *Ailanthus*.

Poor tree that needs the lowest,
coarsest silkworm
to be the tree it was meant to be.

Deprivation has made you beautiful,
like sunsets in thick air,
like the pin in the silkworm's abdomen.