Frances Presley
Two oaks and a triangle

thicker girth
not biodegradable
no need for secateurs

stay here
less than three
headland

ten years
taken out
stemming primate

*It’s funny that the leaves haven’t fallen off*

ever bronze
clinging acorns
fruit fruit fruit

new stems
new growth
these leaf formations

*...*

here the rings end
no further
to reason

expert cut
clear incision

new sidestem
is it too thin
will it continue?

how to prune
what remains
can a replacement be a replacement?
too much competition
to rise above
or simply to leave
and let her go

arranged stone
triangle
her boots

* * *

any self respecting deer could have its feet in
the stone that is only a stone
at the base of brambles
between two beech trees

anxiety for the oak
which must either thrive
or

nettled frenzy
these laurels we do not want
though less invasive

mind shift
gear change
text expected
cyclist

the oaks planted in memory of my mother, Selworthy woods
17 Feb 2007
Naked boy

1

nest more
perforce
range up

naked boy
nay nay ced
head truculent cede

it has its spine
like a boy leaning
like a boy stripped bare

a green coat for the quartz
a pelt
let us pelt

2

the naked boy
rests into the stone
put him up against

what did he say

he’s disappearing
he’s going to turn right
he’s climbing over the gate

two bodies that prop each other up
one animal one human

3

fossilised face
worn down
ossified
turn away

we have gone down
we have gathered
we have emerged

watching the wind farm

leave
drink
protest

high flown pheasant

4

he holds a lap
it shapes a lap

SHIPS THAT WE NEED?

SHAPES

shiplap
just the common name for over
lapping
slates and plates

we have overlapped

Naked Boy, a Neolithic standing stone on Exmoor
12 April 2007
West Anstey longstone

here ti(l) la
my deepest breath
startling deer

startling roil
on the ridge

she’s here at last
the ‘veiled lady’

shepherd of the stream
no strange or rambling

look after each other
each
all one

with a plantering bosom
my own things get done last

patched patchouli
absterrent hardering

made hepworth
veiled but more expressive
than a gormley

look there’s a small orange

the anatomy of sandstone
will not pister

‘d’où viens-tu bergère’?
not from the tour eiffel
or the mobile mast

tired of that ancient world
her masts are flowing familial
her masts
24 June 2007

Caratacus stone

‘failure is not an option’

I

leans sideways
at an awkward angle
this is not the way to strain
gradual ceding
call it quits
double or quits
my double trouble
character gouged
smooth mouthed
leaning tower
kept leaning
lean times
monitored always
identify me with N
for nepus

chipped off
the block
pasted back
with pale pink gum
II

‘The stone is so remote from railways, and the ways of Latinists, that it has hardly ever been seen by an epigraphist’

It is impossible to clearly show the inscription by means of an untouched photograph. So that the sizes and shapes of the letters, and the spacing of the inscription, can be readily seen, they have been outlined at the expense of naturalness

CARĀACI or Caratacus - Welsh national hero of early Roman days, taken in chains to Rome, where, according to Roman historians, he was given his liberty because they were impressed by his fearless bearing

NEPUS = Nepos (Romano-British reading)  Sister’s son, descendent, kinsman, son, grandson, nephew

One of the pieces was distinctly inscribed with N and exactly fitted the fracture immediately preceding the EPVS. The N was cut reversed – a not uncommon error even nowadays

It is to a local hillman, unversed in archaeology, we must turn for the key to the re-discovery of the missing N, for its jealous protection during many months, and for its fixing to the inscription in the exact position and with commendable skill

Carat – represents the passive participle of the verb, which is in Welsh car-u, to love

from Alfred Vowles ‘The history of the Caratacus stone’ (1939)