Home Remedy

Shelley Sanders
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Our world was slashed with irrigation ditches running
Through the trees leaning over Grandma's hedge.  
Our Mama's cancer scar cleft shallowly across
Her broken brow
We took sticks and fished standing on a plank
Watching last year's leaves turn and beckon under
Slow brown water

And it could all be traced back here
To leaf rot, and slime mold
Generations of dead kittens
Underneath the dead kitten tree

Traced to rhubarb growing wild behind Grandma's hedge
In the trees in the
Tall grasses
And to the ragged lilac bushes forming rough arch
Break in the double row of cariganas,
Pale lilac flowers, scentless

Trace it to the gravelled rabbit
Carried home in streaming arms
Green corduroy coat, new
The rabbit buried in the winter garden

Trace her scar back into the trees,
Pry it loose
Watch it slither across her brown-haired
Brow

Wash her in the holy stream of
Irrigation ditch
Knock on plank with fishing sticks
Three times round the dead kitten tree
Her heels ploughing, turning up small bones
Bring her forth through the trees and the
Tall grasses
Through the hedge, out of reach of even the leaning-
Over trees

Rest her on clipped grass, against shapely pruned evergreen,
Sponge blue into her
Thirsty eyes

—Shelley Sanders