

SCRUB OAK

THOMAS SAUNDERS

I saw an oak once less than three feet high,
A prairie oak, full-grown. It grew in sand
With others of its kind, all taller but
None tall. I've known oaks in a kindlier land
Attain a height and girth and a supply
Of dignity; but these could barely jut
Their jagged arms (they had no trunks) above
The ground. Eking a hard existence, there
They stood, defiant, grim, but still alive.
You'd wonder why these oaks were growing where
They couldn't grow. Some kindly, pleasant grove
Would suit them better, where they'd live and thrive
And prosper as they ought.

Life has a way
Of doing things we don't expect her to:
I don't know why these oak trees should have grown
There where they did in that unlikely view,
Or why persisted in their stubborn sway
Against what odds, unlovely and alone.