

# The poplar

*by* Erika Byrne-Ludwig

Sometimes we hurt ourselves, we scratch ourselves, we bleed — for a simple joy... All I wanted to do was to find the poplar again — the tree of my young arms, of my budding breasts. My fingers used to circle around its bold and vigorous waist, but in the course of the years brambles had invaded the path that led to it and covered it with a carpet of thorns. This meant a crossing of pain, of trampling, to reach my joy, to embrace its tall and crevassed body. There it was. I felt its warmth, recognised its animal smell, the magnet that had attracted my chest against its torso long ago. I closed my eyes to better remember and its bark swabbed my bleeding wounds.

