

The Alder, Sheffield 2017

I reach to her across their barrier:

Barbara, come on, please don't cry

I say. She loves the twin trunked alder,

its paired stems like the bond her older
sister shared with her. The tree, barred here
by the felling men, has made her cry –

such grief to lose her, the crying
then, and now, our standing here to save the alder –
it's proving more than she can bear

that they should cut it down. I stay with Barbara
and then more neighbours come. I too start to cry.
The crew look on. We gather round the alder.

Sally Goldsmith