

*Margaret Ritchie*

**his house**

under the oak we plan  
his house. i imagine the door  
where the small patch of grass is;  
the windows for branches.  
you feed me anise seeds  
waiting for my wince, you  
the engineer of this space,  
maybe my kitchen where inside  
i might stew vegetables,  
the garden set aside  
as an afterthought.

and like plumped red peppers  
we sit in the sun our faces wet  
and tender with expansion  
and any sound startles us  
out here  
on your land even beyond the oak,

we play until dark;  
shooting arrows or making love  
and i ask about a child  
but you are building a house  
with room enough for guests.

we are not only lovers of the land or trees  
yet sometimes we sit in the shadow of the oak  
the sharp brown leaves a picnic blanket  
where we eat and plan  
building these rooms