In Remission

When she was ill I was
a tree that would not be spoken to,

though the wind howled me down.
I was a wave that

gathered force under a storm,
spume effervescing, spilling

in the luminous bolt;
bold and unafraid.

I was a cat
that strolls home after you watch a car

roll heavy on its spine.
A single rose that buds

through winter, though its leaves
are eaten by frost.

When she was ill I was a bison,
bullet blasted through my hide,

head down, charging at the gun.
I was a child who goes out to play

despite the bruises on her face
that did not come from the playground.

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But now that she is well
Now that she is well

I am bent
like a tree that is rotted in its roots.

Collapsed like a wave that has travelled
too far, and fades before the shore.

Weak as a sickly kitten
struggling to stand on straggly legs.

Crumpled like the early crocus, beaten
by sleet when hoping for the sun.

I am as spent as the bison fired on till he runs
no more; muzzled corpse alive with guzzling flies.

Like a battered child I offer up my
face for the next hit.

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I guess I am all of us who,
for fear of being caught

unaware, flinch at the shadow
of a hand that might, or might not, be there