

The trees care less

THE trees know nothing, nothing at all. They seem to be waving to you and encouraging you and telling you 'don't give up, don't give up, stick with it, friend'. But they are not. They are just blowing in the wind. The trees know nothing. But the ditch knows.

The ditch knows a great deal, yet the ditch is reticent, quiet, and the ditch does not, will not, cannot tell. The ditch is just (and how the 'just' amuses the ditch) an empty space, a void between two banks, more a void in drought when the rains are late (although the mud in its basin is always there), less a void when the storms come, each autumn, each winter, and the rain pelts and there is no succour for any poor who cannot even hide.

When the rain pelts the ditch is not a void but becomes a treachery, a flood and death to voles and dormice who have shown less care and built their nest too low beneath the ditch's lips where ditch and no-ditch meet, negotiate and settle on a boundary. There is thus an occasional tragedy when vole or dormouse family drown because of a lack of wisdom.

But the trees know nothing of this. Above the ditch, far above, indolent and silent but when the wind blows, they are oblivious to petty natural deaths and care even less, lest obligation should conceive a duty and impose. And this is not what the trees wish. The trees wish nothing but to sway in the wind and seem to wave to those of romantic disposition.

And if a vole, dormouse or any other rodent succumbs to tragic rain and flood well before its time, the trees are not just oblivious but uncaring. The trees know nothing, and care even less.