Returning

Once again May has grabbed me by the scruff, again I’ve sloughed off the winter sleep of forgetting, am stunned by the green dotting trees, how it unfolds in leaps and bounds on verges, in rail sidings, depot yards and every handkerchief of waste ground. It’s as if I’ve never looked at the freckles of milky florets cramming hawthorn twigs, the clots of elderflowers. And though once I ran wild as fieldside brambles it’s as if I’ve never fingered newly risen grasses: feather-headed fescue, the whiskers of barley or the brush heads of timothy, have just learnt that warmth makes a bed among untamed grass which covet clover and white parsley umbrellas. I breathe in the sweet extravagance, dream I’ll come back as grass or blossom until a voice in my head mocks with lists of droughts, names of extinct species. I think of vanished sparrows and how often the stream in the park is dry-lipped, the earth pocked with cracks and it yawns before me: the possibility of fescue, flowers, leaves not returning.