

Digging

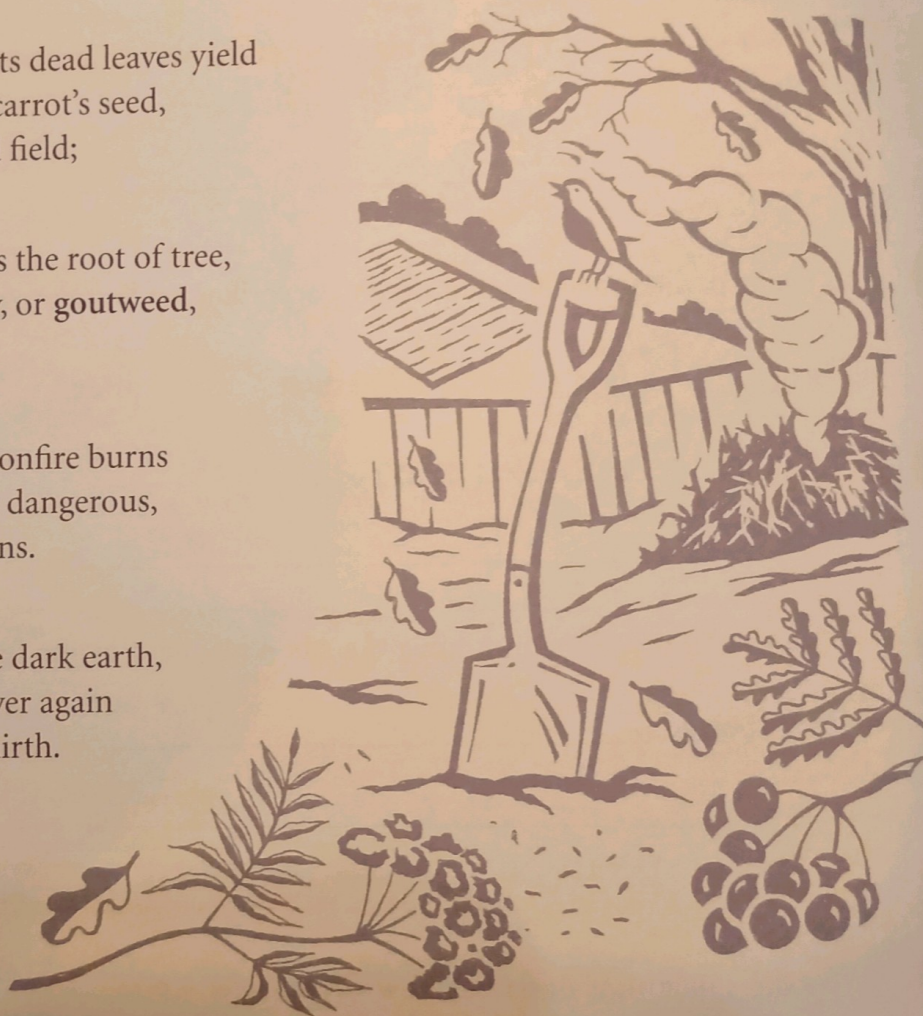
Edward Thomas started his writing career as a journalist and biographer. In 1914, at the start of World War 1, he met the American poet Robert Frost, who encouraged him to write poetry. The following year, Thomas joined the army and in 1917 he was killed in battle.

To-day I think
Only with scents, – scents dead leaves yield
And bracken, and wild carrot's seed,
And the square mustard field;

Odours that rise
When the spade wounds the root of tree,
Rose, currant, raspberry, or goutweed,
Rhubarb or celery;

The smoke's smell, too,
Flowing from where a bonfire burns
The dead, the waste, the dangerous,
And all to sweetness turns.

It is enough
To smell, to crumble the dark earth,
While the robin sings over again
Sad songs of Autumn mirth.



Edward Thomas (1878–1917)

Glossary

goutweed a low plant with strong roots that spreads quickly over the ground