Lawren Harris's
Athabasca Valley, Jasper

Expressing soul claims the catalogue—
and what is that but creating it?
In a single shattered tree
that like a broken dart
centres Athabasca's peaks—
that old Romantic image,
the single suffering tree,
stubborn tree
foregrounded . . .
Consigned to middle distance
smooth complete firs
cannot compete, none worthy
to stand alone and apart:
only a broken shaft
fits a sense of soul.
So, standing before
hard mountains' bland backdrop,
we find soul-self in wood
splintered by time and frost.

_Owens Art Gallery, 1992_
MICHAEL THORPE