

Sugar Maple Poems

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Meghan Barrett

DIRTY

They call us dirty

they have forgotten their sinews were
pulled up from the dirt that lined our wombs
the nutrients that feed their tall, straight spines and build
their cities come from our tapped roots.

Our new-making leaves are punished with the
silencing they demand of our mouths:

we do not choose what comes of us
or becomes of us.

They call us dirty

as we cycle the blood from our sheets
in midnight washing machines that taste metallic
quarters fed with rosy, shame-stained fingers;
as they sweep our children into springtime heaps
litter on the sidewalk in early dawn, they curse
streaked paint of life's pulp where they walk:
the mark of our inconvenient existence in
the secretions that first gave them air.

They call us dirty

as they prune our branches with scowls
watch us weep sap; they hope

next year we won't grow so wide, strategically
starve us of starred light, train us to use optics
 powered by our powdered, burnt bodies
and sell us their sterile dreams:
we are left time-less to wonder how
our growth is always unclean.

They call us dirty
 and what they tell us makes us
hope we won't grow back so
we bend over stubbled forests in bathroom
rain showers, razors bought with cloth woven of
our thin-pressed Amazonian abdomens, the legend
of our depleting strength; now
we are a whisper of blade on taut bark:
we are pruning ourselves to fit bonsai dreams.

They call us dirty
 forgetting our sugared blood was the first holy
oil to crimson their heads:
it trickled into their eyes to open them to
the womb outside our bodies;
 they exchange their wailing for teeth
on saws that bite into our curving osteoporosis spines,
shaping our sides into that perfect hourglass,
ribs lost to the creation of paper perfection:
we are in good form only when they will use us.

So they tap us until we are dry,
call us brittle with age
dangerous, so they cut us
to the stumps of our knees.
They call us crazy, we whisper
the sound a rustle echoed in our leaves:

even as we kneel now,
they will always end lying down,
buried within us

COMMA AFTER LATE BUDBREAK: DEFOLIATION BY AN INVASIVE PEAR

The pear thrip is a comma,
in size and weight, it is pause
in budbreak

mothers sing susurrus in sapriver
of budbreaks past, wet and warm, latecoming no
slick slipped black punctuations under our swollen
scales, loosened

they suck these dry hallowed spaces, leave
them hollowed instead
scalesongs shower the groundwater
soured

taeniothrips inconsequens thrust
mottled yellow-brown witherleaves:
short lives punctuated by oviposition
scarred egg-white promises, broken
clinging to thin veins on hungry branches
hung heavy in budless breezes

thrips come from blankets of
soft rootanchor; it hems us in,
nestled tight, they cloud us
hum as
they explode dark fabric,
carbon-colons of pollution, feathered:

a wombstone plumule, emerged

they are

swept by cool wind: father

an echo of his

pollenspore, blackening crumbs

of fertility, incessant

invasive.

To bring thrips again,

he must think we are yellowing with life

ACERUM ON FOMALHAUT B

I exploded
thirteen (point) seven
billion years ago
a desolate star a fluttering dicot
screaming sussurus unfurled samara
through a loose blanket dark matter
radiating plasma silting humus
I: a born spectre
[bluish white]
rock-weathering, wavewind
shapes my
dust xylem
rings, concentric close-in
this aching debris this harsh cambium
ashenhalted - curling
Sugar slows
as I - turn scarlet: one
billion year
of dying
through equinoxical nights

- covered by photon fabrications

seven-hundred nanometers

sapped anthocyanin

scattering

Rayleigh

Acer

atmospheric wave-bumping

deciduous glucose-freezing

color me a

sunset-travelled

cirrocumulus