

## **In Praise of Trees**

*after W.H. Auden*

What do they form? Bearing in mind clear,

inconsistent treatment, it may not make

for desirable consideration.

But there they are, substance and skin of the

pages we read, the oxygen we breathe,

the forest that makes us homesick and sick for

other simple things, like digging in dirt.

What could be more like Mother than nature?

On vacation admiring the redwoods,

feeling the faults in the bark and admiring,

while her son pisses on another tree,

content in the knowledge that he is doing

what he has been taught; that his own faults

will be appreciated just as tenderly.

If a tree falls in the woods, and no one

is around to hear it, did ego

mania even happen? If an ant

does not see *you* die – would you, understand?

Watch, then, bands of monstrous machines

make it clear, cut in twos and threes and three

hundred seventy million years before you.

Ant in metaphor, speaking of trees as green

money and smoke, do you know what you saw

when you sit on that branch and hack away

at what is behind you? Try to appreciate

the secondary growth allowing arbor

to grow in as well as up then try it.

The poet, admired for his earnest

appreciation of the Burren stone,

sees definition in the faulted ground

that once hosted pine shadows

and made room for sap.

## **It's Not Just the Heart**

I *am* yours, yes -

my hands are yours to hold

And bend and touch

my lips

open to you

my legs

are eager to wrap around you and keep you.

You are welcome

to spread my hips,

to occupy my fourth finger.

My feet will walk with vibration

and elation

toward you

as the song that plays will play.

But my guts remember him, and when we stopped

on the way to North Carolina, and in that field rivaled the sun with heat.

## **Igbos Landing and Other Histories**

*In 1940, a book was published titled "Drums and Shadows: Survival Studies Among the Georgia Coastal Negroes." It is compiled of accounts of oral folklore, many which include, with hope and confidence, flying Africans.*

when drums and shadows came around  
asking what happened,  
not one eye (nor wing) was batted.  
some said *"I never saw, but I know people."*  
some said *"of course I've seen it, why, you got a net?"*

you don't have to believe it, like they didn't have to

TELL IT --

emancipation isn't for the captor.  
more than twenty-five accounts  
of heavenly descent.  
the Gullahs and the Timucuan knew it too,  
but they always knew magic.

if Orpheus could go back for Eurydice  
they could surely escape hell.

"why did he run?"

He forgot he could fly.

## Willful

On some writing in a women's bathroom stall:  
Sad and betrayed, glaring. How did you get here?  
*It is dangerous to remember*, it wept.

Don't blindfold yourself!

Quiet sanctuary of the space, should have  
kept out those who don't know that memory is  
keeping our mothers and grandmothers inside  
our blood, souls, and mind.

Who, in this stall, thinks witches simply burned out?  
When I smell smoke, I become hysterical.  
Mixed race declarations on plantations say,  
His story's not hers.

Stop, think - Brock Turner and yellow wallpaper.  
Really think, was your grandma allowed to vote?  
I think, how sad a woman sat here and thought,  
I don't want to know

-that it's easier imagining, laughing  
alone, than to scream in a coven outside  
for what the tenth muse loved, praised and made form of,  
love for womankind.

## **Lunar Eclipse**

I am the moon.

Dark, quiet, blemished  
and howling

You are the sun.

You make me go down,  
go to bed.

Make me useless,  
and senseless.

You end me and you  
make sense of my existence.

When you're gone I shine.