

St. Louis Pastoral

There are sirens in the city.

The forest is not near.

Ugly pavements, myriad fissures—

trees are contained—

my soul also, is bereft, restrained

a memory of your unsectarian wood calls me out

reveries of riparian bounty beckon me come where my meditation meanders

An alluvial elevation,

soft to the sole;

soft to the soul.

I am subdued *here*.

In a riven land

the anxious jitter of my mind eases

An undisturbed forest is near.

So, I go-

To regain a lucid perspective.

There are sirens in the city

Human and natural tragedy bewailing.

We say, "not mine but belonging to another."

Habitat is shrinking.

Meanwhile an arborist is thinking,

'How do I keep my client, and keep them from felling another pristine tree?'

Lo my soul!

Lo my agony!

Whose talents as a tree man

Subject you to unsavory plans

So, I go-

To hasten my exile to a wooded valley where neither commerce nor carnal contempt for “trees that drop things” willfully afflict in error.

* * *

What toil besmirches ye?! You unsullied young man!

‘tis true

Under skies of endless blue

I once climbed-

and once did I hew-

Portions of this St. Louis urban forest I slew.

I sold my saws

I couldn’t bear to see another one fall.

...and there were sirens in the city

And when...

...when the film of bar oil and sawdust became like skin upon me,

what thought did occur?

To flee.

To retreat to a place where macro carpas of Quercus befall.

To throw myself in snow angel orientation

among a temporal sea of fleshy Virginia Bluebells.

Here my eye rests

And all my prejudice becomes unbrooked

Here my hands will never bear a saw-

My saws will never know the inside of the deep furrows of Cottonwood bark

The dark heart of *Juglans nigra* will never be revealed in all of its beauty

My dark heart will here be revealed and given a normal blood again

Oh, my soul, speak truth! Tell them!

It's true

I conceal this self-reflection no longer:

I am weaker than any man

Every seven days I start anew by laying to death my rotten plan

This castellan, unsectarian wood, is a secret place

--with the world, not apace

tangible constraint, pain, and mortality are observed as historical waypoints – memories

Here, love told me she would wait for me until I was mentally sick no longer-

Here, God showed me a sign.

This place of solemn pilgrimage holds my earthbound secrets- numerous fare

And many too trifling to care-

Always reminding that I am unmalleably me.

So, I go-

To collude with memory and melancholy

* * *

Yet were there sirens in the unenviored city.

Come now tyrants show some pity.

Fore they're our sirens in the city.

When once it's all gone,

The Meadowlark will sing a different song.