Sugar Maple Poems

_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: DEFOIATION 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

*taeniaothrips 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

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

ashenhalted - curling

Sugar slows

as I - turn scarlet: one

billion year

of dying

through equinoxical nights

Meghan Barrett
- covered by photon fabrications

seven-hundred nanometers

sapped anthocyanin

scattering

Rayleigh

Acer

atmospheric wave-bumping

deciduous glucose-freezing

color me a

sunset-travelled

cirrocumulus