

Walnut

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37536/ecozone.2023.14.1.4245>



Where (above the leaves' drift-hang)
it pares its trunk in four,
—an unfastening of joints—the walnut's
impress, its image in the wet,
unwinds,

outruns its mud and trunk, outskies,

as though —its breadth collapsed in thinning air— the whole had fled,
its share of closed locality, its frame, sloughed off,

the grackles chat about its top, presume its lease still
holds.

.
It lacks the heft of recollection in its grain (or leaf-veins,
or any other root or casement of its body)
nor gently cradles the air, nor lags it—

not even in its permanence,
wounds to the taut cage of its upper branches.

No: never recalls the whole tree, or limb, a season, or tension, a root, or wind-kick.

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Who parses the trees from one another, our walnut
from the sugar maples or the Norways across the gate,
conjuring their attention?

Place each bound, a step you'd lay in naming them.
The resonance of names come echoed back you'd wish for,

and up from the walnut-ink-stained ground
your hope of a whole in the tree's shape —branches marginal, roots only more so.

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Between the canopy and ground
the usual spaces loom,
identical and incommensurate,
the intervals that draw
before us and those we intend.