

Jane Satterfield

Kiss Your Ash Goodbye

Captive in the stylist's chair, I let the lightener
work its magic so when the foils come off
I emerge root-smudged, radiant, ash-blond . . .

Sunstruck in the glen behind the school
a stand of maple, ash, & oak sport
their blonding branches, signs
they're under stress. I walk beneath
the thinning canopies, assembly calls
of passing crows.

Each time I left a glass
too near a counter's precipice my mother
said she saw its ghost, as if it had already
shattered. I live in a diminishment
of fireflies, the vortex of swirling gusts,
a week when saws whine through split bark
where larvae weaken once-sturdy trunks
and weave their hieroglyphic galleries. Twenty
felled in quick succession, stumps somehow
intractable, & one strange sentinel
at shoulder height displays its vanished core,
a hollow in the shape of a crooked heart.

What's a century in tree-time?
The mycorrhizal language of lament? The soil's
a site of miracles, radiant rootwork
of canny meets-up I can't see. The daffodils
for now are bright, twirl-worthy one & done.
Another early warming spring & I rehearse
names of hot hues for a shifting season—*Spellbound*,
Relief, *Flight of Fancy*, *Willow in the Wind*.