

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/2

*Patrick Erickson*  
**ARBOR DAY**

I'll retrace my steps; I'll backtrack; I'll retread  
I'll reach the tree line at last light on my own two feet  
A record snowfall has set in. A second wind kicks in  
right around sunset, right about here

I'll catch my breath. I'll lean on the trees themselves  
leaning into the wind. I'll plumb their taproot  
I'll tap their wet reserve, their wet bar  
I'll open the tap and flood the taproom. I'll refresh myself

I'll rest my head on a tree trunk  
I'll lay in the lap of luxury  
I'll lay up a goodly store of tree-ripened pine nuts  
and lay claim to a bed of pine straw, a pillow of pine needles

I'll dip my pen in the only reservoir, the sky-blue inkwell  
and compose sturdy lines. I'll steady the leaves  
and the fruit unbruised, unbidden, perfect-bound  
I'll take my stand with that stand of trees

I'll plunge my roots in and stand fast  
until my leaves turn and my turn comes  
and I turn over a new leaf

until the trees huddled against the woodman's ax  
embrace the woodman, befuddled, spurning his advances  
and every woodman is a tree hugger in his genes  
an arboretum in his gene pool

And every day is Arbor Day  
and every way an arbor way  
and you can't see the forest for the trees.