

Wilderness House Literary Review 18/3

Maureen Clark

Worship

red leaf maple stakes out its territory
a volunteer in the alley

between Church Studio and the Ebenezer Bookstore
small but determined

I wish it luck as if it matters that I'm here looking at it
noticing the ancient ice freezer

and empty boxes around the back door
of the Plum & Main Restaurant

dandelions too numerous to count
but the persistence of the red maple is noble

among the clattering of dishes and overflowing trash cans
and we can't often choose what we worship

Charnel House

California is on fire again
blackened trunks
make a charcoal fence
a few charnel houses
in Paradise
send up dark spears
rending the sky
with their mounds of ash

Mars is close
to the moon now
its red body glowing
like a cinder
the earth
becomes a netherworld
where we live
tightened into circles

of ideology separate
from each other
though we were
not meant to be hermits
or enemies
but here we are being both

this warm November
allows us
to put up Christmas lights
before Thanksgiving
we'll struggle
to give joy to the season

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fearful we'll mistakenly
call down more angels
bearing flames
to destroy
what's left of this planet
the very idea
of community

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Healing Forests

forest
of pine needles
bark and branch green sentinels
path through moonlight and fireflies
August

forest
ghost trees
aroma of pine sap
bathing in the glow of the moon's
torrent

forest
and lodgepole pines
green against glowing green
woods in misty humming breathy
chorus

forests
when you enter
breathe in the healing green
of wood that will absorb old pain
in us

forest
of letting go
the deep dark inside you
look for a door or a gate now
dearest