December Trees

half-melted popsicles,
rain-slathered,

bark spongy with drench-
a lettuce of wood-
and spiny

like squished crabs
in a tubular crate,

icy as rejection,
twitching gale-numbed
claws.

don't climb them;
they snap like horns
of dead ibex,

and grimace
from fangs in notches,
revealing the crush
of hungers inside-

decades of lives
sucked by roots
to lard the pith-

every splinter an ant,
every rumple
some hapless sprite-
the twigs pedipalps

…

Chris Crittenden

stolen from spiders
after they veiled
oaken bones.

…

Chris Crittenden

Strolling By Asters

radial purple
slender and nicked-
auras for beacons of pollen
that bees dip to rummage,

rumbustious

while sunlight sprints
as if driving pinwheels,
faster and faster
until speed seems still,
luminous and sticky,

the perfect lacquer for asters
that fringe a promenade
with their grace,
their dizzy rondures
that partition breeze,
fragile yet august.

…

Chris Crittenden

Storm Wind At Lubec Pier

hopping on black-backed gulls,
leapfrogging crests,
the wind, the hysterical wind,
tickles a tug, exposing
its crabbed potbelly,
then diddles the mast
until the flag trills long.

it re-coiffures the hair
of a Swede, riles newlyweds
from Japan, snags a child's
cottoncandy, throws the pink
to gnashing surf.

down the boardwalk,
threading planks,
sucking them
like Howlin' Wolf
on the blues harmonica,
the wind bashes and gooses,
gropes and flips,
berzerk like a clown
whose nose is so long
it sniffs the whole world
and snorts it out again.

- Chris Crittenden