

**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

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stolen from spiders  
after they veiled  
oaken bones.

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## 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.

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## 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