

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/3

Diane Webster

Grandfather Maple

Grandfather maple
raises limbs skyward
to embrace snowflakes
that tickle its face
like kitten whiskers;
until white tail tucks
around its nose, and it reposes
in frosty snoring
against maple chest
heartbeat barely heard
beneath bark and concentric rings
swirling around in roots buried
deep so deep as to toast its toes
on earth's molten core
until time to stretch
and crack more concrete
and reach for the sky once more.

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Cactus Arms

The cactus raises its arms
and soaks up sunshine
in standing genuflect shadow
as the desert's sundial
when everything else melts
into blurry mirage
and only bugs in mock
of spying scientists
crawl among thorns
instead of impaled.

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Stones Jut

The outcrop of stones
jut into the valley
with an afraid-of-heights woman
wishing for guard rails
and wind in front instead of behind
but thrilled at the image
of a crow leaping
into air
confident in rise
as sure as rocks
plummet to the creek below.

Shadow Thoughts

The neighbor's cat
strolls across the roof
in shadow
on their backyard lawn
and through the chain link fence
not strong enough
to contain a feline image
or to keep out the squirrel
scampering across the road
in the crosswalk in front
of the school where it leaped
through the diamond hole
and into the deserted playground
where a cat shadow
crouches with tail flicking
left and right
like looking for cars
before crossing the street.