

KATHLEEN KIRK

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Liquidambar

You said the gold I found would be my own.  
I find the yellow leaves of *liquidambar*

on the grounds of the asylum. The gardener says  
they come from America, these sweetgum trees.

He likes their leaves like great green hands.  
Fallen, like golden handprints. I look at my own,

how strong they were, how they shaped clay  
and held tools. I climbed ladders like branches

to smooth shoulders of stone. I put a shield  
in Perseus's hand to make the Gorgon see

herself: a little of me, a little of Rose.  
Jessie came and took a picture. You're dead

now. You are long dead, a troll in light.  
Solidified. And so am I. A woman

of cold, white stone. A woman without  
a shadow, or all in shadow. Which am I?

When we dead awaken, what will we find  
in our hands? Leaves of gold, a rising mist?



## ABOUT KATHLEEN KIRK

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Kathleen Kirk is the author of *Nocturnes* (Hyacinth Girl Press 2012), *Living on the Earth* (Finishing Line Press 2010, New Women's Voices Series #74), and *Broken Sonnets* (Finishing Line Press 2009). Her work has appeared in *Confrontation*, *The Greensboro Review*, *Menacing Hedge*, *Poetry East*, and *Waccamaw*. She received an MA in English from DePaul University and currently lives in Normal, Illinois. In addition to being a freelance editor, she reviews poetry books for *Prick of the Spindle* and serves as the poetry editor for *Escape Into Life*. She blogs at [kathleenkirkpoetry.blogspot.com](http://kathleenkirkpoetry.blogspot.com).

"Liquidambar" is one of a collection of poems which Kathleen has written about the sculptor Camille Claudel. The poems will be part of a multi-media performance piece staged by the Columbus Dance Theatre in January 2014.

HERON TREE

17 November 2013

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