

# HERON TREE

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abyss    bones    confinement    door  
family    forager    grace    handwork  
    head    herbs    hollow    indigo  
instructions    jaws    lid    mosses  
    practice    road    shape    shiver  
        shoes    storms    thought  
towns    twins    vowel    voyager  
        war    well    yew



# HERON TREE

EDITED BY  
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This issue collects the poems published on the HERON TREE website  
from October 2016 through February 2017  
as part of the Found in the Public Domain special series.  
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Issue originally published in February 2017; revised to include process notes in March 2018.

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HERON TREE

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FOUND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

HERON TREE PRESS  
CONWAY, ARKANSAS

## HERON TREE : FOUND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

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DEBORAH PURDY

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Where It May Be

I come from out the morning;  
The wind is slow, and the bent willows send

A courteous, yet harrowing grace.  
I come from temples where her altars are—

The world is mine: blue hill still silver lake—  
I open every door.

## SARAH ANN WINN

## Nature, Chrome Painted

drowned in haze, the surface  
 unweathered flows,  
 water hollows valleys, and leaves  
 dry lakes, steep  
 dark and bitter, with thin lies  
 over- vegetating. Saline traces.  
 Sculpture of storms scar past,  
 essays in miniature the terrible canyon  
 which will last. This is a country  
 for maddening, a soil rolling  
 frost calms  
 the dust whirling. No rain or violence.  
 A land of rivers love once  
 visited.  
 Come back, little told.



## HOWIE GOOD

---

### How to Create an Unreliable Narrator

Hold your breath,  
dance slowly

to riffs on real time,  
voyeur voyager forager forester,

a small sound  
in your head.

MELISSA FREDERICK

---

[32]

I'm content when my bones  
withstand time and thought.

You strip them for love,  
for their rhyme.

MELISSA FREDERICK

---

[43]

I see the day,  
but when I sleep,  
dreams look right:

indigo (o happy show),  
seeing (yes) the shine on a yew,  
dead you, gone (yes)

all days. A song, a sign.  
Show me.

CAREY VOSS

---

Henry Banner

I was sold  
the third year of the war  
for fifteen years old.  
That would be  
in 1864.

I must have been  
twelve year old  
when the war started  
and sixteen when  
Lee surrendered.

I was born and raised  
in Ol' Virginny.  
Sold out of Russell County  
during the war.

Ol' Man Menefee refugeed me  
into Tennessee near Knox-  
ville.

They sold me down there  
to a man named Jim Maddison.  
He carried me down in Virginny  
near Lynchburg

sold me to Jim Alec Wright.  
He was the man I was with  
in the time of the surrender.  
Then I was in a town  
called Liberty.

The last time  
I sold for  
two thousand  
three hundred dollars.

More than I'm worth now.

CAREY VOSS

---

Emma Barr

Mama was grown  
when she sold.  
She was mother  
of twenty-seven children.  
She had twins three times.

During the Civil War  
she was run from the Yankees  
and had twins on the road.

They died  
or was born dead  
and she nearly died.  
They was buried  
between twin trees  
close to Hernando, Mississippi.

Dr. Ware had a fine man  
he bred his colored house women to.  
He was a hostler,  
looked after the stock  
and got in wood.

The women hated him,  
and the men done as well.

MARGO TAFT STEVER

---

## Plank Walk

Cincinnati Sanitarium  
Private Hospital for the Insane  
April 7, 1878

Dear Father,

Sunday has come again and gone. The doctor allowed me to move into the cottage. It is retired and quiet, has none of the unpleasant associations connected with the upper story.

At our table are Mr. Sheets, the steward, and his wife; Dr. Savage, the assistant physician; a Judge Johnson, who is staying here, hailing from the South; and your son. No one knows why Judge Johnson is staying here. I have tried to find out in what particular part of his mental or physical structure the deficit exists which requires his confinement in this solitude, but the only item of intelligence elicited is that he has been cross at home, that he is staying here because his family wants to keep him here.

The plank walk which you and I would answer for the purpose of exercise does not seem to meet the case. I never tried walking on a plank walk before. But it is the hardest thing to walk on that I ever got hold of. It is not possible for the foot of mortal man to stand walking on it for any considerable length of time. I have been on it for half a day, and my feet are so sore and bruised that I had to come in long before I wanted to, because my feet would not stand further service in that way. It is a perfect means of torture to move for any length of time upon that walk.

Love to you all,  
Your loving and obedient son,  
Peter

P.S. Will you please tell Tillie that I want a pair of thin soled gaiters? I think there is a pair at No. 592 Freeman Street. If not, A. Hirsch on Walnut Street under the Gibson House has my measurements and can make a pair to suit. The shoes that I am wearing hurt my feet.

WINSTON PLOWES

---

## Man Shaving

pale strong,  
and  
The  
was warty-handed,  
shape;  
he lift he boy

beard  
standing  
a darker  
square

smooth,  
at  
made shaving.  
like that his name,

blue  
his  
big  
runny-nosed

strong,  
were,  
of eyes  
was not  
His  
standing  
perfect and square

head,  
red so  
his  
colour—  
weakness.

## WENDY DEGROAT

---

### The Training of the Hand

#### 1. Preparation

See that the hands are perfectly clean.

Let the light come from behind  
and over the left shoulder if possible.

#### 2. Purpose

Outside the practical advantage,  
mental training through hand and eye  
develops the inventive faculty  
and has a permanent effect on the character.  
Using hand, will, and mind together  
inculcates moral and mental strength,  
patience, thrift, and accuracy,  
love for the true and the beautiful,  
appreciation for the army of those who work,  
a love of doing, and a desire to do for others.

#### 3. Practice

Children must not be sacrificed to perfection,  
to a model, to a stitch as an end in itself.  
Accuracy of thought and action  
is not gained by vain repetition.  
The stitch should be taught as a means  
to a definite article of interest to them.  
The spontaneous handwork natural to a child  
then abides as a powerful ally.  
It is well for the teacher to remember  
that good workers enjoy difficult tasks.



#### 4. Postscript

The training of the hand makes it dexterous  
in other employments.

The enthusiastic and progressive teacher can  
make freer beings of her pupils.

TAMIKO NIMURA

---

Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry  
*for my Yonsei daughters*

Uniting members of a family  
to assist, give,  
provide respect to all,

the following instructions must be observed:  
(A responsible name is held,  
living,  
to receive further instructions.)

Evacuees carry with them the following:  
Family, extra family,  
sufficient family,  
essential personal family.

All will be securely tied, plainly marked.  
That which can be carried by the individual or family group will be permitted.  
The substantial will be accepted.

All instructions pertaining to the movement will be obtained.  
Go to 1942 to receive further instructions.

## SIMON COCKLE

## Memory Cento

An elderly man fell off his horse  
 in crossing a ford on a winter's night;  
 open the head, taking the brains,  
 wash, pick and cleanse.

When it is injured, remembrance  
 is impaired; salt, pepper and parsley  
 the seat of memory, chop the brains fine  
 put bye in a cloth.

Ever afterward he could not bring  
 to his recollection the names of  
 his wife and children: one was called Facey,  
 the other Diamond,

and the third, Oblivion, the Child of Cold.  
 Facey so thin, the wind would have blown  
 her away; sever out the bones,  
 cut the skin

(all her flesh was gone). She stared out of her  
 great eyes as though she'd seen a ghost—  
 at other times, words beginning with a vowel  
 cannot be found.

What was more, the fireplace in the kitchen  
 was one great pile of wood-ash; clean  
 the pot very clean or it will burn too.  
 His bad memory

fell from a considerable height  
 upon his head. He was bothered with it;  
 he could not see how all this had come about.  
 One morning he went

into his cowshed, and there he found his sweet herbs pulverized, although he did not cease to recognize and love them as fondly as before.

M. A. SCOTT

---

3 Secrets

I taste her ink  
 watching her movements

repeat  
 as if she were adorned

jaws shut to draw  
 a shiver—

.....

us

harmless      wild      saints:

I believe,

A little

.....

lost

But

ladylike

her cuffs  
 her liberties  
 her lips

tied up

and

ladylike.

KAREN L. GEORGE

---

Lip of the Well

Where water—inlaid with diamonds—  
Knows stones, and emerald mosses grow,  
Shall you and I read the summer away,  
Fathom the Book of Thirst?

KAREN L. GEORGE

---

In the Well

Like Water—You pervade.

Awe floorless

And no lid.

I house the Abyss—

A ghost of glass.

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 NOTES ON SOURCE AND PROCESS
 

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SIMON COCKLE composed “Memory Cento” from: the recipe for dressing a calf’s head in *American Cookery* by Amelia Simmons (1796); the story of “The Three Cows” in *More English Fairy Tales* by Joseph Jacobs and John D. Batten (first published 1893); and a passage on memory and the brain from *Curiosities of Medical Experience* by J. G. Millingen (1839). Simon writes about the poem and its composition:

I chose my three sources for a number of reasons. Firstly, I wanted to blend fiction and non-fiction to create a poem where it would be difficult to differentiate between fantasy and reality. Secondly, I tried to find sources that contained different registers of language: old English, archaic terms and formal, scientific low-frequency language. Finally, I chose sources that were thematically linked—memory, loss, sensation—to create a cohesive narrative. Once I pieced together fragments of the sources, I was surprised by the sequence of events they told, and how heart-breaking the conclusion was to this family’s story.

WENDY DEGROAT constructed “The Training of the Hand” from the General Directions in *A Handbook of Elementary Sewing* by Etta Proctor Flagg (1915) and the prefaces and Notes for Teachers in *A Sewing Course for Teachers* by Mary Schenck Woolman (1893, 1900, 1908). About the poem Wendy says:

This poem is part of a manuscript about Grace Evelyn Arents, a Progressive Era educator and philanthropist who had a lasting impact on Richmond, Virginia, and Mary Garland Smith, Grace’s companion in her later years. The school Grace founded in 1894, St. Andrew’s, had its roots in a sewing class. Over time, both Grace and Garland served as the school’s principal, and the curriculum expanded to include reading and math, trades, science, physical education, music, and art; yet sewing remained a consistent component. I was drawn to the precise diction in these sewing manual excerpts and the way they illustrate the multifaceted nature of sewing as practical skill and art, as well as a source of moral and mental strength, and a gateway to empathy, self-sufficiency, and further opportunities—elements echoed in Grace’s works and words. I first encountered these manuals at the American Antiquarian Society and later studied copies in Google Books. The sections arranged here relay an engaging and provocative narrative about sewing, education, and the Progressive Era, as well as broader themes important to the manuscript.

MELISSA FREDERICK composed [32] and [43] from words and letters in Sonnets 32 and 43 by William Shakespeare. About the poems and the process of creating them Melissa says:

This poem is part of a series of erasures—deletions, I’m calling them—of Shakespeare’s sonnets. What I do to construct the poems is this: I go to the ‘Shakespeare’s Sonnets’ page on EServer, an open-access arts and humanities web



site founded in 1990. The sonnets page presents you with a block of three-digit numbered links—no quotations, no first lines—from 001 to 154. I choose a number at random, click on the link, and type the sonnet I find there into my computer. I read the text as many times as I have to for the meaning to sink in. Then, when I have the first few words in my head, I start hitting the backspace button. The only rule of law I adhere to is letter order. Words and parts of words in the original sonnet can be eliminated, and line breaks and punctuation can be removed or added at will (hah!) by me.

*and*

I do my best to make some sort of connection between my piece and Shakespeare's vision. Sonnet 32 is one of Shakespeare's more passive-aggressive pieces, where he tells his lover to appreciate his work for the feeling behind it should the writing quality not withstand the test of time. My vision for the deletion was of the lover answering back that Shakespeare only appreciates him (or her) as a literary subject. Sonnet 43 discusses how the speaker's lover appears only in dreams and makes night seem brilliant as day and day miserable as darkness. In [43], I was inspired by a ukulele tune played at the end of a George Harrison tribute concert (really!) to expand the night/day, presence/absence metaphor to incorporate life/death as well.

KAREN L. GEORGE created "Lip of the Well" from words in Emily Dickinson's poem 460 [I know where Wells grow—Droughtless Wells—] and "In the Well" from words in Emily Dickinson's poem 1400 [What mystery pervades a well]. About the poems and their composition Karen says:

I've become addicted to writing found poems. It's just one way to honor the poets whose work speaks to me—in this case Emily Dickinson, and so I also tried to use capitalization in the non-standard way she did. My process for writing found poems is to write words from the source on a separate paper, and scan those words, say them aloud, until I zero in on one word, then another, until images arise that I write on a blank page. When they begin to interact, I modify, rearrange and shape these images into a poem. I find writing found poems satisfying because they often lead me into places I might not have gone before.

HOWIE GOOD assembled "How to Create an Unreliable Narrator" from titles of artworks by Lee Kit, Leslie Hewitt, and Brent Birnbaum. About the poem and the process of creating it Howie says:

The process by which this poem was created—by remixing words and phrases so that their original meanings were subverted or liberated—is also the subject of the poem.

TAMIKO NIMURA's source material for "Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry" is a 1942 US government poster providing directions for the evacuation and internment of people with Japanese heritage during World War II. About the poem and its composition Tamiko says:

During World War II, my father and his family were incarcerated simply for being of Japanese descent and living on the West Coast. Although I was born long after

‘camp,’ I’ve known about it since I was a little girl, and that history has never really left me. In writing this poem I was inspired by the Native American (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen) poet Deborah Miranda, who published a series of erasure poems on her blog, BAD NDNS. The first one, an erasure poem based on the writing of Father Junipero Serra (who was responsible for California missionization), struck me as a beautiful and powerful act of historical reclamation. Can you take the language of the oppressor and create something for yourself, for your community? I decided to try working with the infamous ‘Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry,’ the military demands which were tacked up in public places during wartime. It’s a document that’s painful and almost overly familiar to many Japanese Americans, but I had never really paid much attention to the actual language before. In working closely with the poster’s language, excavating what remains and what resonates for me, I was unexpectedly moved.

WINSTON PLOWES composed “Man Shaving” from the first paragraph of chapter 3 of Willa Cather’s *One of Ours* (1922). About the poem and its composition Winston says:

“Man Shaving” was generated using software to randomise the two hundred words in Cather’s original block of text. Each stanza contains consecutive words plucked from the randomly reordered word list. In so sparse a text I find it surprising that such a coherent and vivid image of the main character still remains.

DEBORAH PURDY’s “Where It May Be” is composed from lines in poems by Emily Dickinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Louisa May Alcott, and Rose Hawthorne Lathrop:

title - “A Lament For S. B. Pat Paw” by Louisa May Alcott

lines 1 and 2 - “Morning Song” and “A Song Before Grief” by Rose Hawthorne Lathrop

lines 3 and 6 - [As imperceptibly as grief] and [Not knowing when the dawn will come] by Emily Dickinson

lines 4 and 5 - “Ode to Silence” and “Journey” by Edna St. Vincent Millay

About the poem and its composition Deborah says:

Using [www.public-domain-poetry.com](http://www.public-domain-poetry.com) as a source, I collected lines from poems by Emily Dickinson, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Louisa May Alcott, and Rose Hawthorne Lathrop. Then I remixed the lines to create new poetry as an imagined collaboration among the four of them.

M. A. SCOTT’s “3 Secrets” is an erasure of Chapter 14, “Secrets,” of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868/9). About the poem and its composition M. A. Scott says:

“3 Secrets” is a kind of compressed erasure, generated from Chapter 14 of *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott. My process was to loosely scan the chapter for interesting words or phrases that would trigger a direction for the poem. I then went back through the text treating it as a word search puzzle to string together new meaning across the pages. This poem is part of an ongoing project of found poems using books I read decades ago as source material.

MARGO TAFT STEVER created “Plank Walk” from a letter written by one of her great great grandfathers. About the poem and the process of creating it Margo says:

“Plank Walk” is one of a number of found poems created from letters written by my great great grandfather, Peter Rawson Taft, when he was institutionalized in the Cincinnati Hospital for the Insane. These letters form the core of my latest chapbook, *The Lunatic Ball*, and my upcoming, full-length collection *CRACKED PIANO*. Peter had earned the distinction of graduating from Yale University with the highest grade point average of any student to that date, but then he contracted typhoid fever, from which he was never able to fully recover. Both of my latest poetry collections explore the nature of the chasm between the certifiably insane and the everyday madness of existence.

CAREY VOSS crafted “Henry Banner” from Henry Banner’s interview with Samuel S. Taylor recorded in the Arkansas volume of the Work Projects Administration/Federal Writers’ Project *Slave Narratives* collection (gathered 1936-1938, collated 1941); she crafted “Emma Barr” from Emma Barr’s interview with Irene Robertson recorded in same volume. About the poems and process of creating them Carey says:

The WPA *Slave Narratives* collection contains more than ten thousand typed pages and represents more than two thousand interviews with former slaves. Because of the nature of the interviews, I tried to limit the role of my own voice in their interpretation. My interest in working with this text is not to transform it, but to uncover and draw attention to powerful storylines in each narrative.

SARAH ANN WINN’s “Nature, Chrome Painted” is an erasure of a page from *The Land of Little Rain* by Mary Hunter Austin (Houghton Mifflin 1903). About the poem and process of creating it Sarah says:

I love the way erasures can bring your own experiences and outlook from a piece which seems as solid as a block of stone before you begin carving. In grad school, I took a class called ‘Creative Processes’ where we examined commonly held perceptions about making a piece of art and being an artist. We experimented with ways around/through perceptions which didn’t serve the art itself: the idea of the lone artist, the idea of a finite number of ideas, the idea of creative block. One of the experiments showed us how even snapping photos could open up new paths in writing. By looking at a set, it was easy to see why a certain photo would stand out as having a ‘mood.’ I didn’t have any idea when I started erasing this source text, a public domain book found on Wave Books’ website, that a poem about loss would emerge.

CONTRIBUTORS

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SIMON COCKLE has published his work in *iOTA*, *London Progressive Journal*, *Pantheon Magazine*, *In Between Hangovers*, and *Poetica Botanica*, as well as in the anthologies *Secrets and Dreams* (Kind of a Hurricane Press 2016) and *Paper Cuts* (Poetry ID 2016). Simon received a master's degree in education from the University of Hertfordshire and teaches English and poetry; he also edits his school's literary magazine. He lives in Aston, England. Online at [www.simoncockle.wordpress.com](http://www.simoncockle.wordpress.com).

WENDY DEGROAT is the author of *Beautiful Machinery* (Headmistress Press 2016), and her work has also appeared in *Common-place*, *Raleigh Review*, *Beltway Poetry Quarterly*, *Forage*, and *Rogue Agent*. She received an MLIS in library and information studies from Florida State University and works as a librarian. She also teaches writing workshops and curates [poetryriver.org](http://poetryriver.org), a resource for documentary poetry and diversifying the contemporary poetry taught in high school and undergraduate classrooms. She lives in Richmond, Virginia.

MELISSA FREDERICK is the author of *She* (Finishing Line Press 2008), and her work has also appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Mid-American Review*, *Moon City Review*, and *Queen Mob's Tea House*. She is a freelance medical editor and lives in suburban Philadelphia. She can be found online at *Miss Fickle Reader's Backwater Domain* ([missficklereader.wordpress.com](http://missficklereader.wordpress.com)).

KAREN L. GEORGE is the author of *Inner Passage* (Red Bird Chapbooks 2014), *Swim Your Way Back* (Dos Madres Press 2014), and *The Fire Circle* (Blue Lyra Press 2016). Her work has appeared in *Naugatuck River Review*, *America*, *The Adirondack Review*, *The Louisville Review*, and *Still*. She received an MFA in fiction from Spalding University, serves as the fiction editor for *Waypoints*, and reviews poetry and interviews poets at *Poetry Matters*. She also participates in The Greater Cincinnati Writers League and the Cincinnati Writers Project poetry critique groups. A retired computer programmer, Karen lives in Florence, Kentucky. Online at [karenlgeorge.snack.ws](http://karenlgeorge.snack.ws).

HOWIE GOOD is the author of *Dangerous Acts Starring Unstable Elements* (Press Americana 2016), *Robots vs. Kung Fu* (forthcoming from Angel Press), and *A Ghost Speaks, a Door Opens* (forthcoming from Another New Calligraphy). His work has appeared in *One Sentence Poems*, *Uut Poetry*, *Poetry WtF?!*, *Rust+Moth*, and *Molly Bloom*. He received a PhD in American Studies from the University of Michigan and is a professor of digital media and journalism at SUNY New Paltz. He also co-edits White Knuckle Press with Dale Wisely. He lives in Highland, New York. Online at [apocalypsemambo.blogspot.com](http://apocalypsemambo.blogspot.com).

TAMIKO NIMURA is a freelance writer and community journalist. Her work has also appeared in *The Rumpus*, *Kartika Review*, *Avidly*, *Discover Nikkei*, and *Hyphen*. She received a PhD in English from the University of Washington and lives in Tacoma, Washington. Online at [tamikonimura.net](http://tamikonimura.net).

WINSTON PLOWES is the author of *Misery Begins at Home* (2010), *Extras* (Origami Poems Project 2014), and *Telephones, Love Hearts & Jellyfish* (Electric Press 2016). His work has also appeared in *Jab Magazine*, *VoiceIn Journal*, *Leads to Leeds*, *Love You Madly: Poetry About Jazz*, and *Found Poetry Review*. A professional freelance writer, Winston has led workshops, taught, and been a poet in residence at a variety of venues, including Square Chapel Centre for the Arts, University of Central Lancashire, West Yorkshire Playhouse, The Gallery at the End of the Lane, Hebden Bridge Arts Fest, Recycle Radio, and Beech Hill Primary School. He lives in Calderdale, UK, and can be found online at [winstonplowes.co.uk](http://winstonplowes.co.uk).

DEBORAH PURDY received a master's degree in library science from Clarion University. Now a retired librarian, she lives outside Philadelphia and creates fiber art. Her work has also appeared in *Gravel*, *Apeiron Review*, *Found Poetry Review*, *Apiary Online*, and *Cleaver Magazine*.

M. A. SCOTT received a bachelor's degree in music from the Hartt School at the University of Hartford. She lives in Westchester County, New York, and works as a paralegal at an investment bank. Her work has also appeared in the *Nancy Drew Anthology* (Silver Birch Press 2016).

MARGO TAFT STEVER has published five collections of poetry, including *The Hudson Line* (Main Street Rag 2012), *The Lunatic Ball* (Kattywompus Press 2015), and *CRACKED PIANO* (forthcoming from CavanKerry Press, Laurel Books imprint in 2019). Her work has also appeared in *Blackbird*, *Salamander*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Connecticut Review*, and *The Cincinnati Review*. She received an MFA in poetry from Sarah Lawrence College and is the founder of The Hudson Valley Writers' Center as well as the founding and current co-editor of Slapering Hol Press. She lives in Sleepy Hollow, New York. Online at [margostever.com](http://margostever.com).

CAREY VOSS is an artist and curator living in Little Rock, Arkansas. She earned an MFA in painting from American University.

SARAH ANN WINN is the author of *Portage* (Sundress Publications 2015), *Field Guide to Alma Avenue and Frew Drive* (Essay Press 2016), and *Haunting the Last House on Holland Island, Fallen into the Bay* (Porkbelly Press 2016). Her work has appeared in *Found Poetry Review*, *Nashville Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *The Massachusetts Review*, and she serves as the associate poetry editor for Zoetic Press. She received an MFA in creative writing from George Mason University and currently lives in Manassas, Virginia. She is teaching poetry workshops for senior citizens at a local community center this fall and is the founder and organizer of Poet Camp, a roving residency for women writers. Online at [Bluebird Words](http://bluebirdwords.com) ([bluebirdwords.com](http://bluebirdwords.com)).

# HERON TREE

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Found in the Public Domain

spys bones confinement door  
family forger grace handwork  
head herbs hollow indigo  
instructions jaws lid mosses  
practice road shape shiver  
shoes storms thought  
towns twins vowel voyager  
war well yew