

Summer Branch Drop / Sudden Demise

Here, reclining under the tree—lounging
in the summer months, in the coveted shade. Shade
of the full leaved, as green as it will come.

How relaxed on your side, your cheek cupped
in your hand, a book open, its pages riffling from wind—flung
forward in the narrative, this rush you deny.

What tree, what kind of tree?
(That which he said connected heaven
and earth. Symbol of.)
The hackberry stationed
on the lot line?
The pine along
the road?
The birch whose branches
scraped against the house
you once owned?

The elm, the Siberian elm. Weighted with rain and then
cooling. Weary and spent, relinquishing what it cannot
maintain. Not ripening, but renouncement precipitating grief.

Here, and there. In that famous garden written of, stories set
in. And the poem. And the painting. This continent
and that one, both with a crack of lightning and no cloud.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelly R. Samuels is the author of *Words Some of Us Rarely Use* (Unsolicited Press 2019) and *Zeena / Zenobia Speaks* (Finishing Line Press 2019). Her poems have appeared in *Sweet Tree Review*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *Rappahannock Review*, *Redactions: Poetry & Poetics*, and *Blood Tree Literature*. An English instructor, she lives in the Upper Midwest and can be found online at krsamuels.com.

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