

SUSAN KAY ANDERSON

Bay Tree

The berries heal
more than leaves
from the tree of the sun.

The oil comfortable
in all cold griefs
even in a new bath.

Saturn!
All pain in the ears
is taken away
to a place nobody knows

where there is dancing with sticks
in ribbons of grass. Everyone
dressed in scarlet.

ABOUT THE POEM

“Bay Tree” was created from the *Complete Herbal* by Nicholas Culpeper (1653). About the poem and the process of composing it, Susan Kay Anderson writes:

I looked for a story that I could tell from material found in this herbal encyclopedia of plants and their healing properties. Most of these plants look like weeds, yet they are healing and magnificently drawn and described within the *Complete Herbal*. Reading this made me want to write in a noble way, as well. What I got from combining words my eyes fell upon, much in the vein of teaching that Martha Rhodes practices with her students, is something surreal, almost like a visit to a country or place I have never been before.

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HERON TREE

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