

*Wilderness House Literary Review 4/1*

*Patrick Carrington*

**Convenient Trees**

Sometimes at night instead of chewing  
through the straps, you submit  
to the bedposts and listen. At first wind,

you think it's the voice of a small girl  
swinging in a grove  
where her father tied a tire to a maple.

The air scrapes its wet back harder  
on the shakes, and then  
you think it might be an angry dog

stretched to the radius of his leash  
as he strangles a willow  
and tries to yank it out to punish

your trespass. The ceiling fan drips  
and mimics the shrinking circle  
of his madness. Thunder claps, and

you think there may be a man stripped  
to the waist and waving  
from a hickory limb, a passion play

for a mob in the shadow of City Hall.  
There is no sanctuary  
when night afflicts you with urges—

to push the swing, to cut the tethers,  
to participate in the butchery—  
It's always the ties that bind, defined

in the fluid arc,  
the taut limit,

of rope.

**Spools**

I know what revolves in the heart—  
I wait as a flower vendor waits  
for every spring, to gather  
and display that which comes back,  
always like the first time. I wait

like a boy to pick and present,  
to parade through every puddle  
I can find, to tumble  
the uncut hills until I'm dizzy  
and marked in green. I know what turns  
and turns in this crazy world—I do,

you, the rest, and every inner nerve  
that wills not what we will  
but of its own impulse, binding  
our growing list of disappointments—

twined end to end and dropped down  
a wishing well, they'd smack  
the dry bottom  
of all those other Aprils,  
in one quick whiz of rope.

*A Trespass of Radiance*

I believe in ghosts.

I have seen their shadows shifting  
through the blurry center of night.  
Squinting, I know they are there, bright  
inside the moonbands that softly wrap  
their edges. And I have heard

darkness ache with their nightmares.  
I have listened, as if my unscarred ears  
could share their song, my throat capture  
courage so cheaply to sing of everlasting  
wounds that leave them that stricken  
and white. I, in my safe bed, worried

by the tiny rages of day, its petty  
holocausts, have reached out to touch  
their light. Arrogantly trespassed  
the thorns, not understanding midnight  
is a deep, dark thing, or that privacy  
bolts and braces their beacon.