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Tree List, Or Stay Again, Blue Collection

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Tree List

1. CAROB

Tree of the musky pods split open,
of almond-shaped leaflets, taut skin,
the Cooper's Hawk picking off a fat pigeon
in the bank parking lot,
tree of bread, tree of milk crates
out back of the restaurant,
tree of the bakery, of the academy of dance
of the skeleton in the chiropractor's office,
tree of sugar, tree of protein.

2. MONKEY PUZZLE

Tree of the don't come near, reserve,
it is better so. Tree of the gesture
on a deserted beach, tree of the unforgettable,
of the tiled roof and teapot in the pantry window,
tree of the private greenhouse, of the new haircut,
the sculpture garden,
of confusion and response,
of the car ride, tree of the stick pin.

3. OLIVE

Tree of the snow-white villa, tree of the blackbird,
of ox blood, of corn popped over a fire,
tree of warm boulders, of sleep in sun.

4. LOQUAT

Tree of the sphinx moth, tree of peaches,
tree of lips, tree of the T-shirt drawer overflowing.

5. SYCAMORE

Tree of the twelve-inch wide handspan, tree of low-
lying areas, cows in grass by the creek, tree
of the pond-sized shadow, tree of coons in the tree,
tree of rain coming some day, tree of the sound
of running water, tree of the umbrella
and person dancing under it.

6. EUCALYPTUS

Tree of the golden halo
on the capsule, of the crescent leaves.

7. OAK

Tree of the mistletoe, the juggler, tree of the robin
with the berry stuck on its bill,
tree of the good host, the red wine,
of the travelling berry wiped off
on furrowed bark, tree of the seed germinating,
the rhizome, tree of the heart,
tree of the keel.

Or Stay Again

The wasp's gray sphere,
papered layers I held
imagining the wings' heat
beating over the eggs,
the wings' cooling in summer
up in the high trees.

At La Guardia,
rows of planes lined up
ready to take off,
painted tails like Lego toys.
Flying east,
how complicated it seems –
scheduled liftings
from runways, you travelling
that web somewhere
to some other place,
late, later, the sun
an orange sliver, fingernail
paring that slips behind
the straight line of horizon,
over ocean
I count the light's white blink
on the plane's wing: nine,
to nine again, twenty
and seven – stop, now stop.

Blue Collection

Smoothed ribbon, night light, once
there were wool dogs isolated
on an island off the sand spit.
My dovekie, my twisted strand of kelp
go to sleep as I tell you this.
Paws crossed, the wool dogs
were shorn twice a year, thick fur
you could run your fingers through
like the prows of ships.
They are gone now, the breed
extinct, diffused, except
for a wool blanket in the town museum
near the coral collection: fingers,
filigrees, swirled brains. At night
the dogs curled under cedars, nestled
against trunks. Sleep,
maybe you will hear them
padding from tree to tree.
Sounds carry over water, they'd listen
for other dogs, the splash of oars
dipping, growls and barks
from the mainland – mongrels,
companions, dogs with short fur,
dogs stealing bread.
A spindle in the museum, a loom,
ship's bell. How heavy the iron
to press the white sheets, the clothes
whitened with blueing
on the dark-haired mannequin.
Low tide one night,
the dogs trotted off, slipped away
from their particular strain

of thick fur, bloodlines.
 Like a row of slip knots pulled straight
 from a shoelace. No one knows
 what they looked like anymore.
 Here – to tie a knot – lean towards
 this light, loop the strands through,
 hold the frayed ends tight

Michael Dumanis

Cancer is a Disease of Animals

When she said she would rather cut
 what was intimate out of her, out of her skin,
 out of the frame she was in, cut it out,

her involvement with him, like a tumor,
 when she said she would rather kill,
 if not for shame, herself, than stay beside,

through the continuance on one damp sheet
 of one more night, him, that she'd rather die
 than lay her shopworn body next to his again,

when she said, *it's no use, we're like having a cancer*
distend in and through me, he wanted to say,
 as he cut, for propriety's sake, himself off