

The Spirit Inside the Tree

By Reed Venrick

Poetry editor Hezekiah writes:

The one that got away: Here is a submission overlooked from our fifth issue. Yes IT can happen (at least to the least of Flea's editors). I guess the best imagery is meant to stick, and Venrick did. I am one of his "careless crew." It reeks of untimely testosterone and the timelessness of trees. "—with legs / for trunks and wrists for limbs / and fresh finger leaves." ... "so the amputation begins." So what's stopping you? Read Venrick. HS (Spacing is poet's own.)

The Spirit Inside the Tree

A lumber-loading truck cranks up,
dirty, diesel clouds pouring out, and
standing beside, a careless crew
and a bulky, sweating lumberjack.

His company logo stretched across
his back—sharpens his chain—with
a T wrench—screws tight the bar;
gazes up at the 100 year old red oak,

His trigger finger twitching, his ears
deafened, muffled, blocked—He
cannot hear the vibration of fear,
nor can he feel the trembling inside

with arms outspread in branches,
the body locked inside an un-
phenomenon design, matching
what is not understood when

life overlaps the Venn—with legs

for trunks and wrists for limbs
and fresh finger leaves. With a voice
growing faint, the living spirit inside

the trunk tries to warn the men,
who stand outside, but the jack,
who has run and gunned shrlll-
buzzing chainsaws for years can
not hear, so the amputation begins.

The Poet Speaks:

This poem was inspired by “The Vitruvian Man,” envisioned by the Roman architect, Virtruvius; later emulated by Da Vinci. As a hiker in forests, I sometimes see trees shaped with trunks and arms outspread, like a human in abstract. My key poetic influence, at least in terms of style, is Yeats.

I emphasize concision, and allow non-essential words only to serve rhythm. I prefer to write poems over fiction and CNF because poems emphasize not just message but also foreground language.

AUTHOR’S BIO: *Reed Venrick lives in Central Florida; often writes poems on themes of nature, and the symbiotic relationship between humans and the natural world.*