

Sean Ward



× we cross paths

The tree was old, sandwiched between fencing—it was neither our neighbors nor ours, a shared shadowy resource. We picked cicada shells off its trunk and watched cardinals mate in its branches.

The threat of this collapse into disrepair forces us to remember; remembering things we do not remember but have mirrored into memory as pretend or imaginative. To have no nostalgia but a method of remembrance that gives us no emotion and no connection to the thing happening. We just know that we were there.

× cut

It was a danger and we cut it down. Cutting as a recognition, to remove disorder, to keep and maintain order. This is not of censure, rather demanding an understanding of constructing and reorganizing one's own squandering.

In suburbia, you really don't need to know the names of the trees.

Removing problematic trees.

Dig up its root.

Grind up its root.

Professional tree removal service.

Techniques to cut trees: leaning, pruning.

Selective tree cutting.

He continues along his adjusted path, guided by uncertain maps. The boundaries of the land are clearly established in the cartographer's imagination. Assessing and judging his path, whether the value of what is felled and sold would be worth anything. Harvesting this area might not be profitable but the development needs this cleared.

He's out there before anyone. Wearing his international orange safety vest, white hardhat, blue jeans and tan boots, his paint sprayer strapped to his back—guided by cardinal directions, he delivers a path through the forest.

My father sent me this email, subject [Photo from End of an Era] remarking *Backyard tree bites the dust. Became a danger to the house.* I have kept coming back to this photo. The tree contains no memory for me except for the background of my childhood, beautiful leaves in the fall. The tree stood there, a marker of time, dangerous to our understanding.

He's working on his forest inventory. The crowding is determined—species are named—ages are stacked—the undergrowth and wildlife are recorded as present. A series of markings indicate this site as needing thinning.

Timber Cruiser

Timber Cruiser

× marked the spot

The slowness of crumbling markers and monuments confuses our thoughts of maintenance and our responsibility to them. Complaining of failure, as if it was made to last or could be built to last. Longing to last: not a sound bite, or a fraction of time, but years, decades, millennia and the impression of not 'us' but of 'them.' It all indicates that things do fall apart and should.

I flew once without a plane. Trying to jump off the swing in the backyard for the first time, I somehow found myself jumping off backwards reclining in midair. As I fell, I looked up and saw the tree. A burst of pain shot through me as I landed. One broken wrist, the right, and one sprained wrist, the left. I remember looking at the sun through its branches.

He moves alone, continuing each day from where he left off. Plotting the future is a lonely job. Running a line from your known point to your first point, the line writes his history through the plot. Any tree along this line must go. He begins to construct a landscape without him.

× where



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