

## **Laurie Rosen – Two Poems**

### **In Conversation with a Poplar**

*New England Forests are Sick*, New York Times October 7, 2020

You communicate through your roots. Feed your brethren,  
caution for pests. I've always felt you all speak to me too.  
Beckon with breezes, autumn hues. Entertain

with shadows and shapes on wretched winter days,  
fill the sky with vernal bouquets. Shade my sweltering  
summer walks. Two springs ago a dogwood dropped

a branch on my car; just scratches. Last fall an oak  
let go its bough on my husband's car; twisted metal,  
broken glass. On a windy, warm October day

I hear a loud crackle before you plummet;  
grey limbs and trunk strewn across my pebbled path,  
dead leaves blown to the road's edge.

If I had not paused by Julie's Barn to marvel  
at your kin—maple, elm and birch—you  
might have brought me with you to the ground.

Now I walk with trepidation, every rustle and creak arouses  
like whispered warnings. I'm terrified you all reached  
your breaking point; next time I won't walk away unscathed.

### **In the Immediate Aftermath**

*Tree of Life Synagogue*, October 27, 2018

I try to tell myself  
it's still worth fighting for,  
this country,  
that God gifts us beauty,  
right here.

The Japanese Maple in my yard  
glows crimson.  
My husband taps out songs  
at the piano.  
A text from my son asks  
if I'm ok.  
One from my daughter  
reminds me  
I always am.

Outrage, then back to routines,  
pointing fingers, sending thoughts  
and prayers,  
to those who died  
standing in thought  
and prayer.

Among the dead:  
two brothers, a doctor  
who treated HIV patients,  
a great-grandmother, a couple  
married over 60 years.  
Each walked out  
of their homes this morning,  
flush with faith.

Autumn wind whips up fallen  
leaves, carries them away.  
Still, I go on believing—  
in the beauty left  
right here.

**Laurie Rosen** is a lifelong New Englander. Her poems have appeared in *The Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Beach Reads*, an anthology from Third Street Writers, *Peregrine* and *Oddball Magazine*, among others.