

Mary Beth Hines – Two Poems

Preparing the Yard for an Ice Rink

We measured and drew, staked
our borders. The boys hurrahed,
visions of stardom.

D-Day, and a lime green monster
mobile crane, Iron Tree, rumbled in,
surveyed the scene.

Fluorescent orange vests, hard hats
swarmed, assessed their adversaries,
began with the most venerable—

blue spruce, grande dame. A man,
nimble as a squirrel, propelled up
the 60-foot backbone, yoked her neck.

Another equipped with electric saw sliced
her trunk. Iron Tree yawned and snatched
like a mother cat jaws a kitten, swung her up

and over the roof of another neighbor's
house where she disappeared into a chipper
we could not see but heard.

One after another they climbed, tied,
and swiveled. Iron Tree grasped, lifted,
delivered. The chipper gobbled, spit, and growled.

They finished the job in less than an hour.
We skulked out, down the hill
to see what we'd wrought—

ten tall trees, their thousand arms, needles, nests, gone.
The bright O's of their cut trunks gaped into sun—
whorled ivory irises, altar wood, stumps.

Geography

Blood runs silently
through the drifts
and hollows,

across the ridges
and stony contours
of my resting body.

The push and pull
of breath, a tide
that settles
the snaky hiss
and tangle
of an eelgrass bed.

There are so many
kinds of silence here—
wind between words,
a voiceless salamander,
bones that catch the light
in a kettle pond.

Mary Beth Hines's debut poetry collection, *Winter at a Summer House*, was published by Kelsay Books in November 2021. Her poetry, short fiction, and nonfiction appear or will soon appear in *Halfway Down the Stairs*, *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Nixes Mate Review* and *Tar River Poetry*.