

## Homage to the Maple in My Yard

by Norma Bradley

Eighty feet, or more, your graceful limbs  
cut a large hole in the sky above me.

I watch the mourning doves perched,  
listen to their cooing. My aging skin  
touches your deep furrowed trunk.

Falling quietly in the night your  
massive limb brushed the house  
and no one even woke, as if you  
didn't want to disturb. It lay on  
the ground dismembered, branches  
scattered, leaves smattered. Piece  
by piece we gathered your remains.  
Your trunk and high branches continue.

As a child I looked out of a second  
story window to a blank concrete wall.  
I took a city bus to visit one planted  
Willow in Van Cortland Park.

Rooted near the lake it cast  
its shadows on rippling water,  
I rested under its canopy along with the  
geese and their goslings. The heat, the  
smell  
of city streets falling away.

The world turned on its head; Covid,  
violence in the streets of our cities  
shaking my bones. Remembering  
my ancestors lost in Uman.

My soul drawn to what has soul,  
I turn to you, old maple. In the rustling  
of your leaves, I hear the wind blowing.  
Patterns of light filtering through  
your canopy — patches of  
sunlight and blue sky.



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