

Forest time

Sharon Jewell

Canaipa Mudlines Residency, October 2019

© Sharon Jewell 2019

Old Giant

Rounding the bend
to the left where
the path divides, you rise
there before me, gleaming
As if to say:
I am why you chose this way;

Old giant,
How much this forest
you have outlived, nourished
by layers of decay
Of those you knew
in earlier days.



tick tock

Here is time in all its shades
from greens to greys,
waxed in cadmium,
rust and xanthous,
weathering layers
of fallen leaves,
and blackened tapered
sapling stems,
seams of russet tannins,
hems of fibrous fawn
on the shedding tree.

Slow knots in a tangled
knit of vines
and mangled twigs
make of time a twisted thing,
while the fast fall
of a slow tree
clasps time firm, like carbon,
holds it like a fist
around the secret centre
of a dark nut heart.



Scribes

The notes on the tree
Are the work of scribbly
gum moth grub:
Ogmograptis scribula!

But do not be fooled!
It is not a literary journey
That the little grub makes
But a culinary one;

Snaking its way between
the outer bark and next year's
under-corky skin
it eats its way in squiggle lines;

to you and I
they appear as ancient signs
we cannot help it, in spite
of what we know;

so the scribe is the glutton
who will, in time,
emerge a full moth or,
if you prefer

a full stop •



Fallen

After you are fallen
and you are no longer tall
but all laid out and long,
do I still call you

Tree?

or is there no name
for one dispossessed
Of their axis,
Unanchored both
from sky
and ground?



The scale of things (2)

The minute and the grand
each fill to the brim
eye and mind.

Small I am against the tree
Though I feel the tree in me;

Giant am I
Over the fragile flower,
Though its command of my senses
Gives it the greater power.



The scale of things (1)

Is it any less
than a tree
that has a single trunk
to be
A flower on a sturdy stem
That holds a single lilac gem?

