

## Elegy for a long leaf

It's been 20 years since the first of you arrived,  
younger then and full of enthusiasm  
for life's new adventures ahead

For 20 years, my sister and I stood, alone, together,  
as we had since we were seedlings  
no longer sheltered by our mother

For 20 years, we offered you shade,  
the faint smell of pine and a  
Home for the birds you loved to watch

When our needles fell, as they do,  
you scooped them up, carried them off,  
instead of allowing them to go back into the earth and  
feed us.

But still, we offered you shade and beauty  
a resting spot for birds.

Life went on marked only by the seasons.

Then one hot summer day there came a vibration.  
stronger than the one that presaged decimation of the  
shrubs.  
stronger than the one used to attack the grass

Closer and closer it came,  
my sister and I leaned into one another  
out of fear and to offer each other strength

She was the first to go.

Her limbs were cut from her body,  
I felt the thud as they fell to the ground.  
My trunk, my roots, and my branches shook  
And I wept

Her trunk was next; cut into sections they could haul away  
to throw away

The vibration stopped just for a moment,  
and for that minute I had hope,  
but then, just as they had done to my sister,  
they cut off my limbs,

I felt them fall to the ground, soon followed by my trunk,  
My sap flowed out of my body as they killed me  
as they killed my sister.

The pain was unimaginable.  
Some say that plants don't feel pain,  
but a few of you, called scientists, have found that we  
do.  
I know I felt the pain.

Think of me when you miss my shade in the hot summer sun.  
Think of me when you see the birds looking for a place  
to perch  
Think of me, my branches no longer dancing gracefully  
in the summer storms  
Think of me, gone forever, and weep

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