

Two Poems

by [Lorenzo Buj](#) (October 2022)



Landscape, Andre Derrain, 1928

Autumn Oak

Walking out into the thinbeaten gold
of a late October afternoon with a light
wind wrestling a rustle from summer's bold
overgrowth of brush and bramble still
hanging on in the sunstippled shade
at the bottom of my father's yard
I stop before an enormous cannonade
of felled oak eleven patrician lengths

strewn about like ozymandian relics each
measuring out meters from cut to cut
where the chainsaw carved its steady screech
into moist cambium and the genius
of the tree torn from red daydream
fled with a blistering shriek that streamed

across jag-lines of suburban rooftop
and jagged on jaded ears as mere
machinery at work just the city
contractors pulling pay lopping back
the colossal boughs that scrape their rear
against our cables but to those of us
past sixty whose hearts are sapped with pity
for stricken timber the autumn's shot
the season's shivered halfway through
the cutters shed similitudes like shavings:
a crack in the grain and our grand old earl's
limbed and sectioned from canopy to crotch
what do I do now raise a plaque for three
surviving stumps and an escutcheoned burl.

The Neighbourhood

Dry July gives early August a wilted tint
parched lawns and afternoons like still-born breath
our split-level street is a monastic grange
nobody moves—or when something does
it's a brief blur from a seventies snapshot
—when the subdivision was young
when the economy came apart
with Carter and we'd readywear
shorts and a t-shirt all the daylong week

save for baseball league and church—
fifty years onward and a new non-fanfare
August rolls out its drought
the heat hangs motionless like it did back then
but appearances deceive
the weather's been awry
climate science declares us unrerieved
smart phones sagely stupefy

—my one neighbour is a self-credentialed
“small-p pessimist” none the worse
for standing pajama-clad amidst his tall flap-petaled
poppies and offering one or two terse
rejoinders on the dangers of “too-much
democracy” —my other neighbour's rarely seen
beyond his driveway he lives unespoused
under a modest height of hornbeam
like an apophatic elder
deflated by the world's enigmatic order
he shuts house on Halloween
and doesn't decorate for Christmas

—the neighbour across the street
is a sound muscular realist
a family man whose life occurs
at all hours whose wife works in realty
a good-looking blonde with cheeks
that swell like peaches when she smiles.

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Lorenzo Buj has been a contract lecturer in literature and art history at universities in southwestern Ontario and Michigan. Recently he issued a collection of short and mid-length poems, *Earlybloom Bombs*, available on Amazon.

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