



Trees Inside

(A psychoanalyst moves from
her park-window office)

Ruth C. Cohn

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Trees—inside my outside windows
Trees rising radiantly
Above pipe-eaten, train-ridden ground
Beyond honking, screeching, swearing—
Trees—skyward reaching—
Fly onward in orgasmic strokes
Orchestra of green!
Trees—walk inside—into me—
For my windows will close.
My house is moving.
Trees—inside my outside windows—
Weaving endless shades and shadows
Into speaking faces—
Condoning pain, condoning cruelty—
Trees in this room of wayward voices
Demanding ungivables:
“...another body, another soul, another life,
Be my parent, my mate, my God...”
Wordless, songless, waveless robot roads
Of inner starvation;
Blood circling in rusty iron
Love doomed to cement.
Pain sitting grayly
Without feet;
Rage lancing blindly;
Hunger stalking through fountains of milk.
Empty shadows crumble, lie down,
“Who cares—so what—leave me alone.”
Scream—little warm curved dancing feet,
Scream—don't chafe away to stumps—
My room—my windows—my trees—
Oneness of beauty and destruction—
Trees through tears of men—

Trees through hatred's red slaughter—
Trees in the dawn of a smile
For people and little things to love—
And growing in the deep body's flowing, desiring—
(By-passing me softly)—
To someone to love—
Somewhere, sometimes, under a tree—
Will I be wise enough and bending—
My trees—without you—there?
Tall poplar—lend me your sky at night—
Cypress stand still!
Fill me—you all—my oaktree, my birch, my all-trees
With your yellow-green spanning
Red-passionate falling
White winter's stillness—
Sing—flying leaves
Sing the reaching
The loving
The grandeur
Sing into my hands and healing—
Be with me—my trees—
Wherever—whenever—
For but my house is moving.

1963

THOUGHTS REVEALED

I revealed my thoughts.
Deep, dark, hidden thoughts,
Evoking visions of First Friday confessions
And examinations of conscience.
Couldn't Sister skip the sixth?
I revealed my thoughts
Born of impure imaginings.
Re-sensing suffocation of claustrophobia in a closed confessional
And "Oh my God, I am heartily sorry ..."
We must accept the punishment.
I revealed my thoughts,
A forbidden fantasy
Recalling the pain of unrelenting guilt
And smothering shame,
The overwhelming sadness of sin.
I revealed my thoughts
And turned away ashamed,
Half-expecting to hear "For your sins you shall say ..."
"It's a beautiful fantasy;
Can you see that I'm not angry?"
He has given me a taste of peace.

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The We in the I

I know I'm really I
Because I live and die;

I'm also part of We
If not, what would "We" be?

The We-part in me sighs:
"I need the other I's!"

The other I's say: "True,
We're parts of Me's and you!"

My We-parts cry: "Illusion!
We are not parts but fusion!"

Ruth Cohn about
1930

The Question is

The question is
what will remain
when shadows dissipate
and glaring colors violate pastels?

The question is
what will remain
when fertile soil erodes
and naked boulders stare
where bread was to be sown?

The question is
who will remain

The Seed

It was but a hard round bullet-like thing
In the deep dark ground –
without knowing.

It could have stayed just that
but for little boys the rain was
playing with mud
and but for little girls the sun was
welling up warmly inside.

Thus the bullet-like hard round thing
was moved
swelled
broke the shell
greened – opened –
and knew.

Yes, it could have stayed longer
a hard, round, bullet-like thing
in the deep dark ground
and shriveled and died
But for the moving.

(The whole wide flowering earth
knows it –
little mountain blue bells
dark red roses.)

Prayer Within

Let me continue being alive, being given, giving.
Let me not forget about the horror of pain and unhappiness
while I am filled with the odor of the blossoming earth –
Let me be kind.
Let me use my days fully.
Let me know the ground and the heavens and be a walking tree.
Let me spill my love into the atoms around me so they
will grow in the eternal rhythm of light.
Let me be stilled to feed me to the starving and not forget.
And let me remember the evil of starvation within myself.

It Was My Tree...

It was my tree.
It had my love
The sky-aged tree
The tree I love.

It was my friend
when it was dark,
leaves waved my friend
into my dark.

It sang the tree
in rustling tunes,
my evening tree
Sang grandmas tunes.

I woke to leaves
green-shimmering light
My morning leaves –
My daily light.

It was my tree.
T h e y owned the ground
They made my tree
fall to the ground.

My tree is buried
its leaves and soul
where my grandma is buried
Deep in my soul.

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