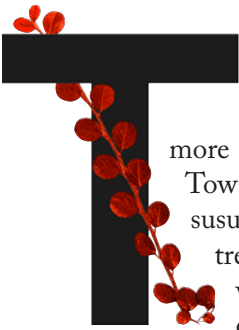


The Frost that Touches the Bark and Goes



This is a complicated conversation. There could be pines, or spruce, larch, tall tamaracks or even alder or ash. Neither shagbark maples nor the plated sycamore are excluded; everyone of the sylvan world is invited. Towards the edge of winter, in early morning, it is the first susurruration, silver and white. The frost speaks with the trees. It is sifted on the fissures of the bark. It prints with small crystals the topic of the day across the skin of the forest. This is a tenderness of advection, of wind and water, of soft rime.

Some call it white frost, or givre. It's a kind of whisper through to the cambium, telling of the refractions and alignments of the cold sparkles that slow down, slow way down to suspend time in ice. Close to winter all the planes align in ice, but the ice is temporary. The trees stand listening. The main topic is structure: the language transpicuous.

This whited painting of the forest is erratic, not predictable. There might be frost arrows arrayed like an explosion across the skin of beeches. There might be radiant frost splayed across hornbeam, across witch hazels. It forms early on the rhytidome of maple, birch and poplar. It becomes a minute landscape of valley and peak; everything covered

with diamonds of the morning. If you are careful, you can hear the lenticels breathing in the most delicate of mists.

Later the meandering of the light will dissipate the hoar. The bark will glisten and then go flat in the day. It was one of those conversations that can only happen early and outside, it cannot be captured. The spicules of frost drift off; they do not remain.

The bark will sigh and expand. This is the frost that touches the bark and goes.

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