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Three Poems by Liz Tucker

Harvesting Timber

You are quite stubborn, my friend
Sturdy, resolute, silent.
No matter how hard I swing my ax
I am unable to break you.
I turn you from side to side
Looking for that place, your Achilles' Heel
A single opening, a discreet flaw
In which to fit my split wedge.
When I think I've found it
I look you in the eye.
For a moment, we stare at each other
Measuring each other's strength.
I ready myself
Sledgehammer high off my shoulder
Yet you lie still, haughty, motionless,
Mocking me into inevitable failure.
And so it is
My determined friend.
You remain in one piece
Whole as the earth intended.

Eggemoggin Reach

I stand perched on the dock, as the sun is about to set
The thick sweet heat permeates my lungs. New
England sweat drips off my elbows, like refugees seeking asylum from
you.
Before jumping, I look across The Reach where the outgoing tide
tends
To expose Pumpkin Island's granite shelf - like a nervous woman who
lost part
Of her dirndl skirt. The lighthouse sits naked and alone, unmade
Except for the mussels that cling to her rocky thighs - shaded
Yet waiting to once again bathe in the waxing Atlantic tide. Knowing
I should never look down below the dark olive water, revealing
The color of my prized childhood marbles, exposing my brother's
counterfeit
Promises, slippery as my hair that slides and floats around my face
lending
No prescribed rhythm. Suspended I look up to the surface at the heart
Of the ripples that knock the dinghy pensively against the dock, like that
of a boy appearing
At his neighbor's door to, once again, retrieve his ball for the 100th time
that year.

Coolie Snowfalls

High on the Sierra Crest,
Round, silent, helpless
They fell
One by one
Before coming to rest
On the railroad tracks below
Invisible to the rest of us
Like dead men walking shackled and slow.

Taoists warned some time ago,
Man's attempt to move things forward,
Shall actually make it worse.
For they who fit these trestles
Thick as bees on the Crest
Blasting stakes into granite shelves
Felled by avalanches
Now lay buried beneath us
Resting in harmonic shadows
Forever out of sight.

Liz Tucker is a writer of both fiction and poetry. Her short stories can be found in *Transfer Magazine* and *Tahoe Blues*. Her short story *Apartment 14B* was chosen by *The Whistling Fire* as the introduction story for its themed issue on *Truth* in May 2012. She was also a runner-up in the *WOW! Women on Writing Spring 2011 Flash Fiction* contest. Her poetry can be found in the *Red River Review*, *Moonshine Ink* and *The Aroostook Review*. She is a sixth-generation Californian living in the Sierra Nevada mountains with her husband and two children, and when she is not writing, Liz can usually be found anywhere outside. To read more of her work, please visit: www.liztucker.wordpress.com

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