

Tree Years

Category: Poems

written by Addeane Caelleigh | December 26, 2008

Addeane Caelleigh

We used to trade off,
she said.

He hated trees dying in our living room.
I always loved the blue spruces
decorated on my December birthday

But his father fell near theirs
dying in their living room
one childhood night.

So we'd have a year with tangled lights, a crooked stand
☒he sometimes helped me put together
Then a year with presents stacked on the corner table,
☒with no dry needles to sweep.

Turn and turn again
a solstice pendulum.
A ring for each alternating year

That was before the fog that eats my life,
some years feast, none famine,
always a forecast of more

She says, I think now
he'd welcome any tree, any year.

About the poet:

After many years as editor of the journal *Academic Medicine*, Addeane Caelleigh is now associate editor of [Hospital Drive](#), an online journal of literature and art published by the University of Virginia School of Medicine, where she is also an administrator and a teacher of faculty development. Addeane is also curator of *Reflections*, an interdisciplinary humanities exhibit series at the University's Claude Moore Health Sciences Library.

About the poem:

"*Tree Years* was prompted by thoughts of how chronic disease insinuates itself into our lives, changing relationships, reshaping inner lives and shifting the patterns of everyday living."

Poetry editors:

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