

**loblolly.**

**by Elisheva Fox**

just outside of town  
along the highway's cursive curl  
there is a pine forest.

ten years ago  
during a drought that  
cracked my lips and the dirt,  
the forest burned down.

now, when i drive through  
and the blue sky presses on the hills  
unpunctured by trees,  
i think about parking my car  
and running to the dead,  
running to the newly grown.

i wish i could read their lettered bark.  
i wish i spoke their needle syntax.

i need to know:

how does it feel  
to be tongued by flame,  
to be greedily consumed,  
to dissolve in a smoky gasp,  
and then  
be born again.