Four Poems
JANA PRIKRYL

Midwood 10

Nodding their pages at you
at night they turn into
the first, the earliest trees
when everything you didn’t know was darkness in the woods
and now it looks
like darkness was the form
of knowledge,
you can’t unsee it again

Midwood 11

That summer when the leaves were at their fluffiest
I issued daily memos on what you mean
the leaves burned neon and suffered the brutish tassels
of the squirrels, wagging sectors of the tree with no notice
as if there were a soul inside scratching itself
it was during just that season
my task to refuse all symbols
to read you clearly, install you across from this
Midwood 18

A day so overcast  
the sparrows the toy ambassadors of nature  
are staying in their crofts their secret hideaways  
the ravine is quiet the maples with their male-pattern baldness  
fluttering blond leaves at midlevel, naked candelabras on top  
where are the sparrows my morning confidants  
what does this shadowless lighting this dusky overture tell them  
the line of every twig every fire escape achieves prominence  
those letters you sent me in childhood folded in a box a whole day’s  
   drive away

Midwood 22

One thing I’ll say about trees  
they never object  
to getting carried away  
I don’t mean uprooted, I mean swept  
sideways while also forth toward a certain place in the sky  
the sun may know about  
what does the sun know  
I don’t mean the constant burning, rather  
unfortunate position, no surrender