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## Sovereignty

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## Sovereignty

### Abstract

Beyond the house, beyond the fence I built  
last summer, down the slope I cleared with saws  
and brushhooks, past the sycamore too large  
for any blade I have, with its hung vines, beyond the trilliums, immaculate  
with white each April, vanishing by June,

### Keywords

poetry, foliage, freedom, rule



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October 28, 2011

## Sovereignty

by W.F. Lantry

“Experience, though noon auctoritee...”

~ Chaucer

Beyond the house, beyond the fence I built  
last summer, down the slope I cleared with saws  
and brushhooks, past the sycamore too large  
for any blade I have, with its hung vines,  
beyond the trilliums, immaculate  
with white each April, vanishing by June,

I cleared the loose dimensions of a glade,  
cut saplings down, untangled every vine,  
rank poison ivy, devil’s thorn, red grape,  
tore out coarse undergrowth, and carried limbs  
storm fallen, to the bramble edge, then mowed  
our meadow grasses almost to a lawn.

I’d hoped to make a ground for summering,

for play and evening song, perhaps a spot  
 where she could mark up scores in quietude  
 untroubled by the chaos of the house,  
 but lifting up the last decaying wood  
 disturbed a swarm of hornets. Poisoned barbs

winged everywhere. I felt them through my shirt  
 and stripped it as I ran. My other clothes  
 littered a path towards the riverbank  
 where finally I paused, my skin in flames.  
 Doused in the stream, I called out, then returned  
 to gather what was left, and limped inside.

*W.F. Lantry holds a PhD from the University of Houston. In 2010 he won the Lindberg Foundation International Poetry for Peace Prize, Crucible Poetry Prize, CutBank Patricia Goedicke Prize, and the National Hackney Literary Award in Poetry. His work has appeared in The Wallace Stevens Journal, Prairie Fire, Kestrel, Asian Cha, Poetry Salzburg, Gulf Coast and Aesthetica. He currently works in Washington, DC and is a contributing editor of Umbrella. His website is <http://wflantry.com/>*

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