

Between faith and the insatiate worm of doubt.

Singly come from eternity to time  
We flounder in this unnatural clime,  
Ever hesitating at the open gate,  
We toss a coin to decide our fate.

—Claire Gaddy

## L'inclination

Can you divine what stirs within  
The serious head you contemplate,  
What laughter smolders underneath  
The lips that speak of life and fate?

In vain I seek to understand  
The riddle of chameleon eyes.  
If I could read that subtle glance,  
Would mine reply in rapt surprise?

Though words would feign betray my heart  
The seal upon my rebel tongue  
Is laid by stronger bonds than love  
And I must leave my love unsung.

Claire Gaddy

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## The Felling

John Roth

**E**ven in death the old elm has a grandeur — a majestic bearing that seems to defy encroaching decay and the ultimate reduction by wind and rot of its long sweeping branches to broken stubs. *Ulmus americana*. Even its stiff botanical name has a lofty, dignified ring. The big tree has stood for many years and its topmost twigs stretch ninety feet into the sky. Its fellows are mere striplings, shoulder-high to its reaching bulk, and, unlike this grand old creature, their limbs still bow in acquiescence to the winds. The elm alone is dead gripped by a tiny, deadly virus, no longer than the tip of a yet unopened bud.

The climber of the removal crew goes to work first, throwing his light Manila rope over a lateral branch and pulling himself up. The rope is never thrown straight over a limb,

but over and around the main trunk; so that, if the limb should break, the climber, slipping, with mouth open and heels digging bark, can fall only down to the next limb where the rope will catch once more. The slender line is thrown again and again, and the "skinner" moves higher and higher until he reaches a predetermined spot about two-thirds of the way up where, when he finally knots a heavy, one-inch pulling rope to the tree, the rope becomes the countering vector of all contrariwise leanings of trunk and branches.

With the climber safely on the ground, the preparation of the notch is the next step. The notch is essential in any tree felling operation, for it is that removed portion of the tree, towards the line of fall, that allows the trunk to rock over unimpeded in the initial moments of its descent. In this particular tree, a properly cut notch is of especial importance, for the grand old monarch which is being removed was city-bred and is surrounded by objects of smaller size but of greater value. On the left is a small white bungalow; on the right, at the entrance to a driveway, is an electric lantern on a post. The tree, which must not touch either of these, is to be dropped in an eight-foot space. The notch then must be perfect, for if it is cut too much to the left or to the right, the tree may twist in the fall and smash one object or the other. Removal of the notch is not a big job for a twelve horse-power Disston saw, the chain-type blade of which cuts a quarter-inch kerf. In a matter of seconds the notch has been completed. The free end of the "bull-rope," its other end high in the tree, is now attached to the winch on the log-truck, which is parked at the end of the tree's line of fall.

The final cut is begun slowly, for it too is important and must be managed so that upon completion, it will be just two inches above the bottom cut of the notch. As the chain buries itself, however, the top sawer depresses the throttle more and more until by the time the first wedge is stuck, the saw is whining at top speed. As the saw bites deeper, the wedges are driven in. The cut widens almost imperceptibly, but the top of the tree begins to lean farther and farther from perpendicular. At the other end the winch tightens. The winch-man takes only what the wedges give, for if the strain be too great and a breaking rope or cable should allow the tree to rock back on the wedges, they would be ejected like spent cartridges from a rifle, and the tree would kick back the wrong way. When the back cut nearly reaches the notch, the sawer releases the throttle. The winch and the wedges can do the



rest, and the men at the saw stand waiting until the trunk lifts clear of the stump and the machine can be removed. The tree is no longer mute; as the wedges are driven up, it pops and groans protestingly when tissues check and tear and finally snap free. The elm stands poised for an instant, towering as if in one final gesture of defiance, and then the top starts over. Faster and faster it descends until, just as it gets horizontal to the ground, lunges free and forward of the stump and hits the ground with a wind-swishing, dust-raising boom that drowns the already trailing cry of "Timber!"

On the ground, the majesty of the old elm is gone. Broken limbs elbow up, and loosened bark hangs from the log. Large black ants and other ugly, crawling parasites swarm from crack and crevice. Its bruised and broken body lies quite still, and little men with ax and saw begin to strip away its mighty branches.

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## Ph.D.

Betty VanDerbilt

**H**e was a short man smoking a short pipe of pleasant-smelling tobacco. He held a book with papers under one arm. Both pipe and book were held firmly. As he paced slowly back and forth in the noisy hall, he stopped occasionally as if he were completing a thought. His small gray eyes squinted first at one student and then at another. A faint smile played around his mouth as he puffed and bit at the pipe.

The bell rang. He emptied the pipe against his hand and slipped it into the pocket of his brown suit, which was of good cloth and appeared comfortably lived-in. Unhurried now, he entered the classroom and laid the book upon the desk. He surveyed the class as if he were searching for an unprepared student. Finding none, he sat upon the creaky desk chair and took the papers from the book. He looked down his large angular nose at the papers; his eyes seemed to burn a hole through them. He drew his lips together as with a string and blew into his hands several tuneless whistles. He took no notice of a late and hasty student.

A hush fell upon the group as he chose a paper and with his firm, long-fingered hands spread it open upon the desk. Glancing briefly at the sunny weather outside, he turned