

For the Sake of a Photo

They loved the park in the late summer
with its two-inch high—no more—emerald-green grass carpet,
its antique colonial lampposts,
finely stained cherry grain benches with intricate etchings just like home,
unscented beds of yellow silk tulips and
wallpaper print roses growing in the bushes.

The horizon hung on the west wing
of the park like a picture done in adorable shades of blue and pink,
except for one small tree that seemed out of place,
and framed at some angles by maples no closer
than a hundred meters apart,
scattered for just a touch of nature.

Seated with posture on a bench these two
photogenic inamoratos
absorbed the sun until it dissolves in the horizon
and they lounged in their unnaturally pleasant perfection,
she holding a camera in anticipation.

He swam with one arm through the air
until it landed undulantly on her
cushioned shoulder, hand stroking her gold
bleached hair that looked real,
drawing a moderate line through her make-up
from that intimate spot under her ear to the pendulum curve of her chin
they moved like clockwork.

Wait
she said
its time
she held
the camera.
But that young tree
ruins the picture.

Its leaves shook
erratically
in the untimely
breeze.

He swam with both arms cutting
through the air until they fell freakishly on its sapling shoulder,
hand choking its inherently gold-hued leaves,
fingers pressing a deep dent in its trunk as he ripped
it from that intimate spot in the ground
and flung it aside
with ambitious ignorance.

She
snapped her photograph
pleased to catch the sunset
at the cost of
only one tree.

--Mark A. Clements