

NANCY MILLER GOMEZ

Why I Tie My Hair to Trees

Thick black handfuls gathered
from the comb. I carry the nest of it
outside to the old oak
and drape it on a low-hanging branch.
Later when I look, it's gone,
carried off by wind or birds.
I like to imagine it as home
for song sparrows, the strands
woven into the twigs and leaves.
Or collected by the wood rat
along with cobwebs and cloth
and buried in the woodpile.
I picture part of me nested
into the lives of these creatures.
Or maybe blown into the trees,
tangled in the lacy crown
of the hemlock. At night
when the outlines of familiar objects
run into the dark, I like to think
there is a part me that isn't
afraid, one slender curl
shining in the moonlight.

Nancy Miller Gomez's work has appeared or is forthcoming in *River Styx*, *Rattle*, the *Massachusetts Review*, *Bellingham Review*, *Verses Daily*, *American Life in Poetry*, and *Nimrod*, as well as on the Poetry Foundation website. She was a semifinalist for the Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry, and her first chapbook, *Punishment* (Rattle, 2018), was published as part of the Rattle Chapbook Series. She has a master of fine arts in poetry from Pacific University and she cofounded the Santa Cruz Poetry Project, an organization that provides poetry workshops to incarcerated men and women.

KAREN GALLAGHER IVERSON

Crest From Below, Tahoe Tree Line 6, 2017
Drawn and pochoir-colored pastel on wax on panel, 10 in x 10 in



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