

To the Family Who Bought Our House and Now Want to Cut Down All the Trees

Please don't chop the creek willow,
or that laburnum we raised
from a stripling,
or the lovely rare pagoda tree.
Let them grow wild, let their leaves
lap the sides of the house.
Don't pull down the wisteria
that winds
over the oriel window,
soaking the glass in a watery light.
Without it,
the afternoon sun will slap your face
like a movie hysteric's.
Let there be only ambient light,
muttering its several softer
points of view.
Not a sunlight that bores
as it bores.
This house was all skin, all shelter
and shade.
We buried our secrets under the
floorboards,
insulted the attic ourselves.
Who needs searchlights,
limelight, a laser's seven a.m.
subcutaneous drill.
That unadulterated glare you crave
is infamous,
a history of confessions, conversions,
round-the-clock interrogations.
It's the Nazi of light.
Remember, the German word
for bright is *hell*.

Jeanne Wagner

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