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## Pine Beetles: Spring 2003

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## PINE BEETLES: SPRING 2003

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Joyce Compton Brown

Winter's wrung wrong side out  
on Linville Mountain.  
Poplars and maples glow green in the crevices  
but pine scrubs stand brown and dying in the roils.  
Their limbs drip grey snow on galax at their feet.  
Death oozes out pores of bark, sticks to the touch,  
waits for the last green needle.

Scrub pines are waste trees,  
fit for pulp mills, squirrel nests, bear claws.  
Shallow rooted knuckles cling for years  
to Linville's thin soil, slide into rock slams, clutch  
till the winter wind rips out their hearts,  
till ice pulls them headlong toward the soil  
where the cones have thrown haphazard seeds to start again,  
where they rot to mulch more scrub pine.

But now they're eaten from within,  
shelter for their own destruction,  
winter death in summer drought.  
In a dry year even the chip  
and shred of pulp mills  
can't keep up with beetle jaws.