

Archna Sahni

Plants Rewrite History

Eyeless,
and without a yawn,
we still see the dawn breaking.
Our chlorophyll has never slept
since the earth began.

Move over, two-legged man, and see
that we are the first pagans,
raising our arms to the blazing sun,
eating sweet mouthfuls of earth:
our every meal is a prayer is a meal.

Have you ever heard
a scratching sound on the pages
in our bark, watched
how the soundless calligraphy
of creepers, verges
onto a word?

In your church,
why do you never sing
the mystery of
our bark that is your flesh,
our sap that is your blood –

O our kingdom reigns yet
in coal and oil and every seed
and the fossils that lie beneath the sea.
Once we danced upon the earth
but for you we stood still,
became motionless between sky and earth
so that you could move and dream.
While you crowned yourself with thorns,
our toes turned into roots, shuddered, and were still.
O sleeping heaving million-eyed beast,
so blind he will never see,
so now we reveal:

Prometheus was not a man
but *we* –
We stole the fire of the sun
shooting it as sap

through our hundred-armed History
into your dazed open mouth:

and you suddenly
opened your eyes
and forged a wheel.