

# Two Poems

by [Lorenzo Buj](#) (October 2022)



*Landscape*, Andre Derrain, 1928

## Autumn Oak

Walking out into the thinbeaten gold  
of a late October afternoon with a light  
wind wrestling a rustle from summer's bold  
overgrowth of brush and bramble still  
hanging on in the sunstippled shade  
at the bottom of my father's yard  
I stop before an enormous cannonade  
of felled oak eleven patrician lengths

strewn about like ozymandian relics each  
measuring out meters from cut to cut  
where the chainsaw carved its steady screech  
into moist cambium and the genius  
of the tree torn from red daydream  
fled with a blistering shriek that streamed  
  
across jag-lines of suburban rooftop  
and jagged on jaded ears as mere  
machinery at work just the city  
contractors pulling pay lopping back  
the colossal boughs that scrape their rear  
against our cables but to those of us  
past sixty whose hearts are sapped with pity  
for stricken timber the autumn's shot  
the season's shivered halfway through  
the cutters shed similitudes like shavings:  
a crack in the grain and our grand old earl's  
limbed and sectioned from canopy to crotch  
what do I do now raise a plaque for three  
surviving stumps and an escutcheoned burl.

## The Neighbourhood

Dry July gives early August a wilted tint  
parched lawns and afternoons like still-born breath  
our split-level street is a monastic grange  
nobody moves—or when something does  
it's a brief blur from a seventies snapshot  
—when the subdivision was young  
when the economy came apart  
with Carter and we'd readywear  
shorts and a t-shirt all the daylong week

save for baseball league and church—  
fifty years onward and a new non-fanfare  
August rolls out its drought  
the heat hangs motionless like it did back then  
but appearances deceive  
the weather's been awry  
climate science declares us unrerieved  
smart phones sagely stupefy

—my one neighbour is a self-credentialed  
“small-p pessimist” none the worse  
for standing pajama-clad amidst his tall flap-petaled  
poppies and offering one or two terse  
rejoinders on the dangers of “too-much  
democracy” —my other neighbour's rarely seen  
beyond his driveway he lives unespoused  
under a modest height of hornbeam  
like an apophatic elder  
deflated by the world's enigmatic order  
he shuts house on Halloween  
and doesn't decorate for Christmas

—the neighbour across the street  
is a sound muscular realist  
a family man whose life occurs  
at all hours whose wife works in realty  
a good-looking blonde with cheeks  
that swell like peaches when she smiles.

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Lorenzo Buj has been a contract lecturer in literature and art history at universities in southwestern Ontario and Michigan. Recently he issued a collection of short and mid-length poems, *Earlybloom Bombs*, available on Amazon.

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