

Alder and alder

by Tesia Wieprecht

Crooked onto the ends
of the peely bark tree
hang long, drooping
soft flowers
that grow in clusters
like honeyed pine cones
spilling their golden pollen
into the wind
when disturbed
by grasping claws,
scurrying feet, wild wing,
or fingers flicking.

Give me a world
sooty with that turmeric dust
steeped in sunset
rays dyeing everything
the colour of a life lived.

Catkin, alder flower, ament
spun into fables
of stealing from the rich,
slinging arrows through the wood,
hiding outlaws from the law's eyes.

Under the alders
there are secrets to
whisper, midnight
meetings to catch.
Crowns to melt.

On the same breeze that
bends branch, scatters seeds
comes the sound of medieval merchants:
money clinking as it
changes hands,
shouts of laughter
and betrayal
and two men singing, "Oo de lally, oo de lally!"