

66 Trees

—you and I are suddenly what the trees try to tell us we are . . .  
John Ashbery, from “Some Trees”

of course I wish him dead  
abusively inside me  
I think of him in parts  
  
as in that devastating Fassbinder  
movie starring his Moroccan lover—both of whom  
had terrible truncated ends  
  
Yesterday morning in a bleary-eyed  
anxious preflight return-to-my east-coast-life  
I learned L’s still in a coma at a rehab center in Queens  
  
she showed signs of visual tracking, close  
to a miracle, and twice squeezed her husband’s hand

\*

66 trees because we counted them  
  
and took pictures for the police report  
  
cut down in the backyard, the thickness  
like so many body bags, bone bright white birch,  
among the graying drizzled upper field  
  
stone walls more visible  
the neighbor’s house, view, and market value improved

\*

we must be reading the same books  
that monograph on Proust,  
and the anecdote about the rats in the male brothel  
a twisted metaphor for identity and gratification  
understandable given the era

\*

therefore thicker, older  
and we priced trees that weekend  
in persistent rain  
in the mist air sprays that work to keep them alive  
  
a growing copper beech, twelve inches in diameter  
costs \$10,000, once you see the silvery-coppery  
gnarled bark there’s no forgetting, no mistaking

\*

believe me with L’s health and another suicide—  
I’m left with a huge hole and writing  
seems worthless, \$1,100 worth  
of vandalism and a car rental later  
  
who can focus on this yoga bullshit  
  
enough for a psychic breakdown  
everything’s come to a ground-down halt  
difficult to fathom: another handsome gay man  
drowned in faraway Puerto Rico—  
emblematic . . . & meanwhile

I have pantry moths and a strained check book . . .  
  
in another email her baby’s locked  
in the bathroom playing with the toilet plunger  
  
what are pantry moths anyway?

\*

Today, all day, at my mother’s house she interrupted me  
while I was working, because I don’t see her enough  
and she’s getting older, the ways older gets—

what I’m afraid is falsely recovered  
66 trees, body bags

the insides of the bags,  
stuck inside the unfolded plastic

smoldering-mulching trees  
what I’m afraid of

the missed-numbered decade  
the ruthless fugue state I grapple

trucked down trunked down  
bitter crop

\*

as I read—by the *only* gay Italian poet  
who died of AIDS in 1996—*Il Poeta Assassinato*,  
a second book on the subject of Pier Paolo Pasolini  
and his murder by a gang of gay pickups

intense days, thinking about eighteen-rear-old prostitutes  
and the career-making obit of a dear poet-suicide  
there’s a (w)hole (world) through the back window of my car  
and I probably need a new boyfriend

PETER COVINO’S books of poetry include *The Right Place to Jump* (forthcoming 2012) and *Cut Off the Ears of Winter* (2007 PEN Osterweil Award), both from New Issues. He is an assistant professor of English at the University of Rhode Island.



Index of Advertisers	Page		Page
Ahsakta Press	37	Pacific University	22
Alice James Books	36	Painted Bride Quarterly	39
The ALSCW Broadside Gallery	22	Penguin Poetry	12
Autumn House Press	34	PhatSalmon.com	42
Barrow Street, Inc.	11	Presa Press	35
Bellday Books, Inc.	40	Princeton University Press	20
Bennington Writing Seminars	25	Rattle	11
Birch Brook Press	11	Review: Literature and Art of the Americas	42
Black Lawrence Press	11	Saturnalia Books	40
Bottom Dog Press	21	The Sheep Meadow Press	26, 33
Carnegie Mellon University Press	42	<i>Terracotta Smoke</i>	42
<i>The City of Eden</i>	20	University of Iowa Press	55
Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Annual Poetry Prizes	39	University of San Francisco	37
Drew University	12	The University of Wisconsin Press	41
<i>Elegiac: Footnotes to Rilke’s Duino Elegies</i>	40	Vallum: new international poetics	35
Hanging Loose Press	8	Virginia Tech	8
James A. Michener Center for Writers	14	Warren Wilson College	55
Lesley University	39	Wesleyan University Press	24
Morris Publishing	44	Whitman Cooks!	40
New England College	19	Winning Writers	44
Off the Grid Press	16	APR Stanley Kunitz Prize	2
Omnidawn Publishing	4	APR Subscriptions	4

Copyright of American Poetry Review is the property of American Poetry Review and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.