

CATRIONA WRIGHT

SPECIES LONELINESS

Like everyone else, I want to use trees
as a metaphor for myself
and my dream community.

The way they share sugar, party
with mushrooms, lean on each other, learn
not to binge on soil moisture in spring.

They even scream ultrasonically! From thirst!
Personally I am not above anthropomorphizing trees.
I can't think as plants think

though maybe in future I will be able to
hire a tree sensitivity reader
who will delicately highlight how wrong I am

about everything. I welcome this as I welcome all
(okay most!) confirmations of my ignorance.
Make my trunk stronger, thicker, more receptive.

Trees mostly know what they have to do
and they get on with it. They lavish shade, they burn
red and yellow for a few weeks then sleep, they toss

and drop and gussy up their seeds, they are full
of busy holes. And who doesn't want
to be like that? I suspect they wouldn't be wild

about being compared to me, given how bent
I've grown, how straggled
my crown, how I gorge myself on nutrients only

to throw them back up, how my roots took a decade-long
smoke break after barely nudging into soil, how I blossom out
of sync with my neighbours, how I never even bothered

to learn their names.