

ALL THE PRETTY PLANE TREES OF NANKING

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when this was the capital the french gave nanking plane trees
which were planted evenly along the avenues
these provided shade and a european touch
urban planning for a republic that never quite obtained
and so a century dwindles above them in gunfire flags and fogs
even the subway hasn't uprooted them all yet
it's hard to know what to wish for in a case like that
health and beauty are such backbiting sisters
every year people will say as for me i don't usually have allergies
but this spring i don't know why i wake up my eyes streaming
why every spring have we forgotten the venomous dowry
while the city kids must for shade and scenery seasonally ritually choke
the eyes swell shut the gaze is sealed in
the pollen floats into your throat and it blocks the passage of air
it builds up and the trees occlude your intake
life becomes a blind and labored narrow strait
blocked by reproduction
promiscuous history is a gift from abroad pollinating
propagating itself and my gorge is thickening closing filling
the proliferating past gets into my airways and staunches my blood, my line.
the past the leafy beautiful past picturesquely strangling its children.