

Naming

My father had named each tree he'd
Planted those forty years—sometimes fool
Names like Burden or Stump, after a choice
Laying-in, sometimes decorous tags like Red
Promise or Border Seer, when his tools
Aspired to sceptres, and Nature's voice

Dared speak through father's carved walnut plaques.
Trees planted in lines spoke our neighbors' purpose,
Ordered and docile, fit for a calendar;
But father made earth his sealing wax
And left his conceit upon the surface:
A last green word to the patient stars.

— *Sal Cetrano*