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## Scrub Pines

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*Scrub Pines*

We are jointed, gerontocrats, a geometer's dream,  
bolder than lichens, we square and skew

our limbs into a slow addition of angles,  
increasing the world's degrees.

Like the mushrooms, that grow round-edged  
and flaccid on manure,

we conform to our soil,  
the compost of monks who fed on water, salt, and bran,

the matter for the meager annual rings  
we squeeze into our thin corsets of air.

Needless of needles, or the light they convert,  
we are the limbs we go out on,

neither leading nor following,  
staying out of the way,

pivots of the spinning which men at our side  
see when they look over the cliff.

We are above all, inedible,  
Melchizedeks on our ground.

Blight and rot starve;  
in winter, as they emaciate like us,

browsing deer pass by on their acute bones,  
repelled by our fixity.