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Calaveras Big Trees

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Amy Pence

Calaveras Big Trees

In my 180th incarnation
I cut and reassembled a sequoia
for the traveling exhibition
in 1860, year of our Lord.

We paraded that giant across
twenty states, jiggling it together
into spectacle: I did not mourn
the hunted. All
was quiet to myself.

Near death, astral flash of mother
bent near me with tin cup,
my own blind heels
riveting the stump
of the mammoth tree
with twenty-two other dancers.

Then a shudder through
my blood: two rivers join
the Self to the giant
I murdered.

Unparted, we lift
our traces—root-stomping
out of time.