



LICHEN POETRY



FEATURING WORKS BY
LILY SHARP
FINN RUST

Nature's Embrace

A patchwork of creation stretching and branching
Bark expands and falls in shrinking breaths
Biting the cold in its maple teeth
And with each new day, the blanket stretches onward
Inching and creeping, extending its warm fingers
Over crisp edges like cheekbones and jawlines.

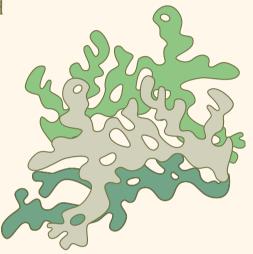
Grandma's hand-sewn quilt
A tartan weave, blanketing beech trees
Covering cedars
Enveloping evergreens
Vibrant jolts of orange woven
With subtleties of lime and mint,
Ochre and gray mingle and flirt
A patchwork of lichens
Woven together like fingers intertwined—
Gloved fingers locking, savoring the warmth.

I pull the quilt over my head And fall fast asleep In Mother Nature's arms.









A Little Lichen Limerick: "Old Man's Beard"

Oh, the little old man in the woods,
Knocked on my door with a basket of goods.
He'd had a long beard,
But it had been sheared!
Oh, I never believed that he would!

Lily Sharp

From a Lichen's View:

"The Silent Observer"

Lily Sharp

I sit.

Along a lamppost I am affixed.

Crusted over and grasping on for dear life.

The rough stone fixture stands

Like a holy altar,

The grasses surrounding it paying homage

The sun beams down on us all,

Scorching this once sacred land,

Lighting me ablaze from the inside out.

But from my pedestal, I remain affixed.

Steadily, through clenched fists and gritted teeth,

I persist.

It is all I can do.

When the heat becomes too much to bear,

When my limbs beg for respite— a whisper of water,

A semblance of shade

I shut down,

My body must rest

While I persist.

It is all I can do.

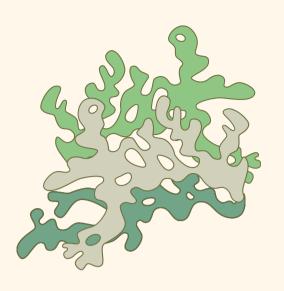
But steadily I linger
Affixed upon this rough, stone lamppost,
Body shut down,
But mind wide awake.
I observe the world
Spinning around me,
While stoically, silently,

I watch the old couple
On the far bench
Painting the giant redwoods
Of this heavenly park.
They unknowingly paint my portrait,
In their subtle strokes of
Green and light yellows,
A touch of gray, a hint of orange
They see me not,
But I notice them.

watch the woman with her dog.
She's speaking on the telephone,
Gesturing animatedly.
Lost in her own world.
Her dog sniffs the grass,
Searching for his favorite spot,
And rolls to his back.
The yellowing shrubbery,
Warm as sun rays,
Embraces the young pup.
The telephone woman sees him not,
But I notice.

I watch the young girl,
The one with the headphones
And furrowed eyebrows.
She crosses the street
With barely a glance
In either direction.
From her hand falls a drip of the sun,
A cigarette stain.
Embers scatter.
She does not see us,
But we notice her.
We feel her affects.





A Set of Haikus:

I find a lichen
On a walk in the canyon
Ouch! I tripped and fell!

I pick myself up And head back to bio lab Chemical-K test?

Identify it!
Perhaps a Xanthoria?
Hannah will be proud.

Lily Sharp

A Lichen Acrostic:

Every new day brings
Vivacious hues of mint and lime green
Exquisite creatures and colors
Racing through my mind at all hours
Never will I forget how to
Identify
A lichen as unique or beautiful

Placed in a special chamber in my mind
Radiant and refreshing, such a sight to behold
Unyielding in growth and spread
Never will I neglect to notice
Another lichen at the toe of my shoe
Something so sweet and gentle
To show my loved ones
Resolutely will she continue to grow, as
I admire from afar.



An Ode to Reed Canyon:

Under a shield of evergreen canopies
The grandest in all of Oregon
Early mornings, quiet like the hush after a snowfall
A solemn bench, a gentle receiver
You warm the souls of worn out minds.

Reflecting the moon off your crystal springs,
Awed mouths and hopeful eyes admire your presence
A light footfall crunches your leaves
And you cradle its step,
Cushion its fall.

A duck bathes, dips its head under the surface Through the water it peers At the salmon and algae, Your gentle children peacefully drifting In mineral-rich streams.

A squirrel scales a tree,
Chasing its lover through the canopy
Your arms extend wide enough
To cradle the whole campus
Full of extravagant minds
And yearning souls.

Lily Sharp

Fallen Lichen

The breeze came through,
and pulled us back
and forth,
Lifted our home
from the neighborhood streets.
And the fall was mightier,
than the devil's plummet.
For he was given
a kingdom
and us
a grave.

My hands tore through the flesh of your palm, until blood mingled into one being.

I wanted death to be ours a shared headstone.

The wind carried us,
and the concrete greeted us,
and our neighbors,
still in a lover's embrace
joined us in exile.

Finn Rust

Mount Rushmore's Lost Village

I'm sorry they scrubbed you tiny creatures off cheekbones and nose bridges lip curves and chin divots

I'm sorry

that they tore you from trees washed away your homes

deemed you

dangerous

deemed you

an eyesore.

The work you put in,

To grow together,

To become one,

To be something more,

To be something,

together

gone when they decided that they knew nature better than you.

Finn Rust

Ramalina menziesii
torn dress of simple
lace that hangs in sparkling tatter
naked tree covered

wisps and threads of beauty and elegance dance over thin branches

where do leaves begin and lichen end? needle and thread together

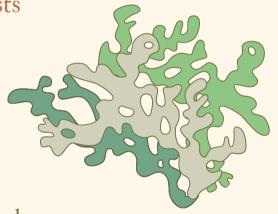
Finn Rust

They took us up to space, exposed us to black nothing.
We choked on breath we could not inhale.

I held you tight, and you held tighter, they will say we survived because we would not let go.

The Scientists

You scratch with blades tear at my flesh
You drown me.
Stare me down.
What are you?



You douse me in chemicals, and blind me with light all to ask

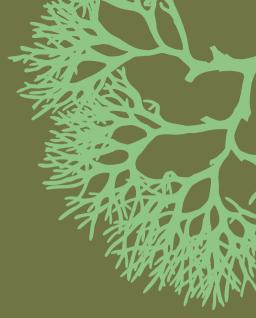
What are you?

If I formed teeth, and tongue to speak I wouldn't answer your question. It would be a simple sentence What are you?

Finn Rust

Arctic Lichen

The cold that comes, The flakes that fall, the snow that numbs, our fingers and all.



We chose here to be
we made our bed with white.
With no eyes to see,
I hold you close and tight

They will say empty words of how we made a special home of how we live with no creatures or birds of how we live here all alone.

But we both know, that we defy so that even in snow there is you and I.

Finn Rust