

The Cellar Keeper

The knots in his knuckles match the swirls
in the oak by now. The rope at his waist
holds him together as a hoop holds staves.
It has been a long winter for him but

he knows that beyond the monastery walls,
the hops have withered, climbed, and flowered
a hundred times. All the while posted rows
in the fields stood straight, adorned with vines.

The spry bell ringer rises and dips
a bluebird on the breeze, but the old monk
descends the cobbled stairs as sandaled feet
shuffle above: the first liturgy has begun.

The cellar ceiling drips on his shaved head,
which glistens like dew on a cold glass.

The Poplar's Shadow on the Crematorium at Dachau:

Twin rows of skeleton poplars framed

the bare prism where they were caught.

Their shell bodies balled around their hearts;

the gallows, waiting to be blessed

by a man anointed with lightning bolts.

Past the stone wall overgrown with moss,

where the mother's hand could no longer brush

the child's naked forehead with snow embossed.

Their fingertips must have held red droplets

like holly berries against the snow.

Their ashes reach through decades,

and catch on our eyelashes.

Taken and cocooned in blackened brick.

Aber wir werden vergisst nicht

The inscription above the Jewish memorial at Dachau is "Aber wir werden vergisst nicht" which is German for "We will not forget"

Reflections on Margo Crane

They called her nympho, slut
Indian maiden, river princess, wolf girl.
She met the hunter in the woods, the meth cooker,
the plant worker, and the preacher;
but she moved beyond each of them-
clawing her way downriver.
She met the old man with a death wish
smoking unfiltered in his wheelchair,
calling her nothing and asking her everything.
It was a long haul, but by the time
she clambered onto that old boat, she had a name for herself.
She called herself glutton, wolverine, mother,
a mother so fierce she might
tear the head off any predator that came too near.

For Bonnie Jo Campbell, thank you for writing *Once Upon a River*