

Yalobusha Review

Volume 5

Article 15

8-1-1999

City Birch

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Recommended Citation

Prettiman, C. A. (1999) "City Birch," *Yalobusha Review*: Vol. 5 , Article 15.
Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/yr/vol5/iss1/15>

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C.A Prettiman
City Birch

It is half-erased now, the cloud-
stroking ash-birch that scattered its chalky
branches like coins, rode the soil like
a green-sailed ship, its colors dyed into
a hundred-year landscape. Now midmorning
after the of harnessed lightning,
its uncloaked moon-colored trunk
juts like a painted spike, snowing dust, a
ladder of polled horns and creude
terminals. The sky is suddenly
blanker, and bewildered warblers grasp
at remaining limbs, songless. In
a moment's sad irony, the saw
catches fire, driving the sweat-bellied
workers back, shading their eyes. Yet
by supertime the canvas drips
only bleach. Sawdust on the birdless breeze.