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Never Chant

Gay Baines

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Never Chant

by Gay Baines

Never chant in the forest.
They will call you mad,
whistle to each other
of your strangeness.

They know feather songs,
the plunge of rain,
the cries of fawns
trapped in spring flood.

They know the stench of humankind,
the roar & bite of the screw.
Left on their own, trees outlive us,
know us as leaners, sitters,

swingers, carvers.
They expect harmony
from geese, or they keep
memory on their leaves,

store data in the hollow
grub-rich coffins of their fallen.
If you chant among them,
they will know you've

capitulated,
and will rustle
closer to each other
to draw you in.

