

Choosing the fairy spud (Original Version)

once this land was forest. then farmland. now a city and suburbs.
but we can still walk through the woods.
(last piece of the real world in our modern landscape)

out there
is a three hundred year-old oak tree white oak age unheard of in this area this place with
a booming forestry industry trees just don't get old
and yet She exists, the grandmother of the land

in early spring the first flowers sprout out of the forest floor
one inch high with white petals
like a star
fairy spuds they are called, or you can call them spring beauty, or claytonia virginia

did you know you can eat their roots like potatoes

did you know that the dandelion
which grows everywhere which is the bane of housewives
who want a perfectly green lawn
– did you know that chinese herbalists use their juice to cure liver problems
and speedwell speedwell!
have you ever seen it
smaller than your pinkie nail almost need a magnifying glass
miniature violet with irregular petals

and that is what the farmer's plow digs up when it churns and turns the earth
The Speedwell. The Dandelion. The Fairy Spud.

and the woodcutter eats up the beech, red oak, white oak, white ash, green ash, sycamore and sweet
gum
and the last to fall is the grandmother of the land

and after the plow came the tractor and after the tractor the bulldozer and after the bulldozer the
houses and roads and cars and SUVs and people who use antibacterial soap and office buildings and
universities and airports and people who don't own baseball caps advertising seed companies and
people who can't identify a white ash from an oak tree and swimming pools instead of swimming holes
like Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer used to swim in and it's all leading up to
the invention of the iPhone

and so I ask you the last of my questions
what is the line between you and the fairy spud
what is the line
where do you place yourself
do you at least recycle
do you need air conditioning

do you walk in the woods on purpose
what is the line
because someone, out there, someone *has* to choose the fairy spud

what do you choose

Choosing the fairy spud

(Re (En)Visioned)

Yet she exists—grandmother of the land,
white oak, age unheard of in suburbia,
last piece of the original world's hands.

Surrounded by the first sprouts of spring:
fairy spuds—one-inch high, white star-struck petals.
(Did you know their roots are edible things?)

First in spring, first under the plow, turning
wilderness to farm, farm to rows of identical houses.
Unnecessary flowers chewed in the churning.

As the woodcutter eats beech, red oak, white ash,
sycamore, sweet gum. So the last to fall
is the grandmother of that last gasp

of the earth we've sacrificed to trains and
cars and planes and air-conditioned houses
and iPhones and wi-fi and Netflix and

this endless line of choices. We
take, break, make the world new in our image
we chew up everything we see

So what is the line between you and
the fairy spud? What is the line? What do you choose?
What will you do with your wild and one precious life? What will you do with your hand?

Because, someone out there, someone *has* to choose the fairy spud.

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