

## Limber

**Angela Pelster**

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It's perhaps a bit disingenuous for Angela Pelster to declare that her marvelous collection of essays is not a memoir. She might argue that nature is the principle subject, with an emphasis on trees; trees communicating with one another through roots and fungi, the cinnabar tree that grows on the moon, and the maple tree that should not be taken as a metaphor although "we are both only one strong wind from falling."

But there is also this about a winter in Alberta, Canada: "It was the time of my life when I was sick and newly divorced, when my house had burned down and my dad was smoking crack." More than a little memoirist that, even though she salved her distress with a walk through an "arid desert of snow," observing along the way that the aspen is the heaviest living thing in the world because, below ground, sprouted suckers shoot out for acres from the same enormous root.

The book's title, *Limber*, alludes to the limber pine that grows in harsh places and bends to the elements. *Limber* also describes the literary stylishness of these essays. They are imaginative, instructive, and deviously entertaining. Observations about frogs having teeth on the roofs of their mouths, squirrels being North America's answer to the monkey, or the magic of the mango serve to draw readers to serious reflections on environmental crimes by man, theological uncertainty, and death's inevitability.

Angela Pelster has been published in literary journals and has written an award-winning children's book. *Limber* should establish her as a force for—and maybe even of—nature.

THOMAS BEVIER (Spring 2014)

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