

Tree Farm

By Jefferson Carter

Zipper squirrels tumble
from pre-lumber to pre-lumber.

Several pre-venison
watch you, their markings

like butcher's diagrams,
dotted lines that indicate

choice cuts. Best of all,
you can feel safe here

even if you're lost.
15 feet, exactly,

between the trunks
of each susurrant pre-plank.

Bee's Knees Assisted Living Center

By Jefferson Carter

We'll fit you up with a Bumblebee Guide,
a 4-by-5 foot tin cutout attached to a latex band.
Twice a day, your bee guide will pull you
through the Hive of Rehabilitation, what
we call a Life-flight, the tin bee & the latex band
color-coded blue for a one-month New-bee, red
for a two-month Gonna-bee & when you've been
here three months, yellow & black stripes
because you're now a King-bee! Your
Life-flight concludes with a celebration, a dip
in the honey-pot sauna, a free wing-massage,
a fresh pair of cannulas & unlimited karaoke
in the Bee's Knees Community Room.

Elegy For My Mother

By Jefferson Carter

Some well-meaning friends offer
condolences. I don't tell them,
never mind, it's ok. 95 years,
no pain, sitting in her Lazy-girl,
rubbing for hours the ribbed surface
of somebody's birthday card.

What's to mourn? I think
of her inside the soft wood
of the coffin, her dentures
polished, a thread tugging at
her smile, the painted, weightless
husk she's left behind

Jefferson Carter bio: Jefferson Carter has lived in Tucson since 1953. Currently, he is a passionate volunteer for Sky Island Alliance, a local environmental organization. Jefferson was a featured reader at the Tucson Poetry Festival in 2007 and at the Tucson Festival of Books in 2009, 2012, and 2013. His work has appeared in journals like Carolina Quarterly, Shenandoah, Cream City Review, Barrow Street and New Poets of the American West. His fourth chapbook, Tough Love, won the Riverstone Poetry Press award. Chax Press (Tucson) published Sentimental Blue in 2007, My Kind of Animal in 2010, and Get Serious: New and Selected Poems, which was named a Southwest Best Book in 2013 by the Tucson/Pima County Public Library.