

December 2008

## The Earth Fell From Under Because The Tree Was Cut

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### Recommended Citation

Miko, Chelle (2008) "The Earth Fell From Under Because The Tree Was Cut," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 7: Iss. 2, Article 26.

Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol7/iss2/26>

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# Miko: The Earth Fell From Under Because The Tree Was Cut

## THE EARTH FELL FROM UNDER BECAUSE THE TREE WAS CUT

—*W. S. Merwin*

Chelle Miko

The cockatoo swoops in  
with a long scream that silences the crowd.  
A furious red-tipped plume, it comes to rest  
on the reedy shoulder of a girl, where it stops  
its mean tune, even as she gives a small cry  
at the claw, a thorn in her skin.

I watch the curious head swivel and bring an eye  
so near the girl's that both of hers snap tight  
as a locket.

My brother once pounced in  
to the chicken coop to pinch an egg,  
one eye on the startled hen,  
who with a lightning quick pluck,  
stole an ounce of vision  
from his socket. And now the girl,

face-to-face with the brilliant bird  
she's been clapping madly for, recoils,  
as we all seem to, when the bird dips  
its blunt hook of a bill, and filches one slick white  
button, then digs its grip into the collarbone  
under her blouse, and lunges back into flight.

The crowd's collective sigh assures me  
soon there will be nothing  
but the dark gloss of night. Even now, the throng exits  
and keeps its distance from the stage,  
as if a panicked hook were dragging a lid  
across the nervous eye of earth, leaving us  
as curled and shut tight as we were before birth.