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Christopher Bernard

City of Downed Trees

A black column barring an alley.
Another held almost gently in a cat's cradle of wire.
Another thrust rudely against a wall,
its finger-like roots grasping at nothing.
A stump pulled from concrete by some passing god.
A park with the strangest sight: a mass grave dug in the air.

Then every block, every street:

down the avenues, a regiment of giants beaten to the ground
in perfect perspective diminishing in the distance.

A tree fallen is an unsettling thing,
what had seemed so fine in its strength
against an unruly sky

—but to see so many of them.

Christopher Bernard is a co-editor of *Caveat Lector*. His collection *The Socialist's Garden of Verses* won a PEN Oakland Josephine Miles Award and was named one of “The Top Indie Books of 2021” by *Kirkus Reviews*. His two books for children – *If You Ride A Crooked Trolley . . .* and *The Judgment Of Biestia* – appeared in late 2023.