

DAN MAY

One year of visiting an aspen glade

In the leafless muddy spring,
the aspen glade feels no shame
about what is missing.

Which is not a metaphor for me to weigh:
the trees belong to the trees. I leave them alone.

Summer comes verdant, leafy green
shade for mushrooms and shrews and fearless
short ones. New life is not proud.

Lived accomplishment was my birthright.
Aspis means shield, but the trees are not here
to protect me.

Yellows browning and falling,
trees have no fear of what they are about to lose.
Preparation yes but not missing
the longer days.

In my year of coming here
I have learned nothing.
Only misunderstanding.
The cycle of life is a spiraling down. A weightlessness.

Frozen branches thin and waiting, but
not weighty. Not afraid.
The aspen have no breath to billow out into the subzero air.

Author's Note: The poem *One year of visiting an aspen glade*, as a *Fano plane poem* is structured by the Fano plane, which is represented by the figure below. Each of the poem's seven repeated words corresponds to one of the seven points of the Fano plane. The seven stanzas correspond to the seven lines of the Fano plane: the three sides of the triangle, the three altitudes, and the inscribed circle. According to the geometry of the Fano plane, any two of the repeated words appear together in exactly one stanza, and any two stanzas share exactly one of the words between them. More information may be found in: *Galaxies Containing Infinite Worlds: Poetry from Finite Projective Planes*, by D. May & C. H. Wika, Proceedings of Bridges Baltimore, 259-266, 2015. <http://archive.bridgesmathart.org/2015/bridges2015-259.html>

