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# **Blood Sugar and Conception of March**

### Sean Prentiss

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# **Blood Sugar**

### Sean Prentiss

During the primaveral season, our sugar maples share a gift of sugar-water, which appears mere magic from the veins of this place but is actually a mystic bundled process of chemistry and physics. Last summer, these maples converted sun to sucrose as we humans convert language to song. Once their autumn leaves tumbled to forest's floor, all residual sap was warehoused in each tree's rays, harbored till spring's revival. Then during the freeze-thaw cycle, when nights plummet but days offer warm spring winds, we trudge knee-deep snow to drill two inches into each maple. We hammer till spouts hold tight into acer wood.

We festoon buckets from each spout.

During this freeze-thaw cycle,

internal pressure forces sap

from sapwood.

Plunk plunk—sap tumbles

into ancient galvanized buckets.

A song of reawakened woods,

a herald to soon-to-return songbirds.

A drop at a time, sugar water

gathers in buckets, we pray

toward overflow.

A drop at a time,

yawping out in their own language.

Each afternoon, when chilled weather

leads to suction and silence,

it is then that we heave

sap water to our deck, ignite

our propane stove, and place

buckets above fire.

Soon, pots share up steam to an evening air,

a gift to cold nights.

Over the burn, nature's divinity

turns forty gallons of maple sap

into one gallon of syrup.

As dusk soaks the sky,

as Solstice Mountain dims, we dip

spoons into the boil

to taste what blood-sugar

our trees provide,

and it tastes of earth, of sweet, of tree, of roots sunk deep within the soil of home.

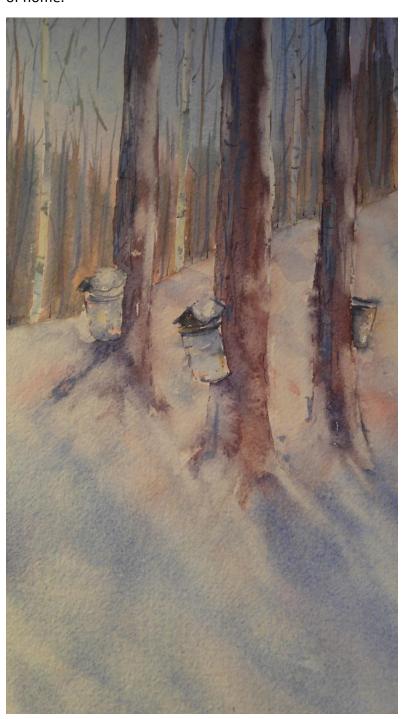


Image: Richard Henry Hingston, "Sap Buckets," © 2017. Reproduced by permission of the artist.

# Conception of March

# Sean Prentiss

For unborn Acorn.

Those monogamous screech owls

perch beside each other on

pine branches. The male performing

an elaborate dance—a lifting of wings, a prostration

before her, a bringing of food. The female, too,

dances—jumping and bowing

again, again.

A ruffed grouse drums air beneath

his wings, reverberating a percussion

through our woods, a music to a mate.

From the branches

of our alders, mourning

doves coo to forever partners.

The male returns

to the female with alms of

grass, needles, bits of branches.

The female constructs

a nest where together they will perch

upon eggs.

The brown slink and hop

of the male mink travels far to reach

Solstice Lake females.

Maybe, Sarah, we will spot their tracks in the lake's muddy shoreline. Let us lean in close and examine the prints. Let us gaze to the branches of the trees to learn from this coupling world around us.

March is a season of nesting, of conception.

We, too, are animals. We, too, must use this season

to create.

Let us too court.

I will fetch you morning tea.

You may lounge your sleepy head upon my shoulder. I will lose my fingers into your wilderness of hair.