

## Getting to the Root of the Matter

It's too easy to blame  
the empty bottle  
for a parent's barbed  
cruelty. Dig deep enough  
in the family plot,  
missing bodies will appear.

A father's tongue designs  
tainted tales from  
an altered other world,  
much like the politician  
who weaves stories,  
carefully leaving out  
vital facts and history.

Blaming a parent  
through that family tree  
only leads back to roots  
that die inside mounds of dirt.

Memory has been looted  
and polluted by unfounded truths.

The trick is growing fruit

when neither sun nor water offer  
sustenance for future years.

Maureen Sherbondy's forthcoming book is *The Body Remembers*. Maureen's work has appeared in *Southern Humanities Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *Calyx*, and other journals. Maureen lives in Durham, NC. [www.maurensherbondy.com](http://www.maurensherbondy.com)