

White Pines

by [Julie L. Moore](#) in the [July 2025](#) issue

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The tree is not coming back, the arborist said,
thanks to the pine bark beetles that
tunneled beneath its tissue,

then gnawed upon the phloem,
a surreptitious, years-long feast
finally consumed in the end.

Last week as I mowed, circling it
 & the other two white pines,
 which altogether formed a diagonal

tic-tac-toe along my property line,
all seemed green & serene amid the trees.
Now they've all been sprayed.

My daughter hammocks
on the two pines that'll live,
records herself swinging in the snap-

pea polyester, shows me the footage.
 Above her face the long, soft needles
 sway in the July sky dappled

with the kind of clouds we've come
to expect in this season, innocuous
in the morning but bulbous,
building, if the forecast can be trusted,
ever slowly toward afternoon storm.

A sudden death, I say to the tree feller
who arrives a few days later to estimate

the cost of removal. His face is swathed
in scar from a house fire long ago,

the price of attempted rescue.

He says he calls my pastor

from time to time when he is

low. Says it helps. He will hew

the limbs, cut the trunk to the quick,

down to the ground. Then send in

the stump grinder. He knows no easy

remedy for loss but tells me to toss

grass seed over the top, *so by next year,*

no one will ever know it was there.