West by Southwest

Robin Leslie Jacobson
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Cypresses, Land’s End, San Francisco

By Robin Leslie Jacobson

Where I was raised, people leaned hard into hurricanes, stood their ground no matter how things pushed at them, natural or unnatural — the cell memory of all those crossings against the current. In me too the pilgrim urge to fight it: wind stroking the blue-green belly of earth, earth curling into wind like a lover aroused.

Were there so many storms before walls?

Out here, where cypresses grow in shapes bonsai masters trace to make wind visible, even here there are pyramids, dams — our long migration not without baggage.

The great green crones know better. Anchored in the crags they face whatever comes, the way I once rode carousels, hugging the horse’s neck, trusting it would hold through all the ups and downs, my chestnut mane streaming behind me in the centrifugal air.