

Hazard, Home

A red-breasted sapsucker drills a cedar's cambium
in *neat punctured rows*. Drinks when the sapwells begin to flow.

Feeds on attracted insects, and flies off.

A rufous hummingbird flashes in for its share.

Room is made for martens when time hollows a hemlock:

the arborists' hazard, home to more scufflers and singers.

It's the dying-off that reinvigorates; roosts, rests, hidden shelters,

clinging of bat claw under flap of loose bark.

A broken-topped safe house, pocked, naked,

a pine primed for primary cavity excavators

like that double-keystone-species sapsucker, who gouges,

inhabits, and departs. A new home for secondary cavity nesters

like chickadees. Wrens. Swallows.

*The phrase *neat punctured rows* is from *Wildlife & Trees in British Columbia* by Fenger, Manning, Cooper, Guy and Bradford. Lone Pine Publishing, 2006.

- Christine Lowther