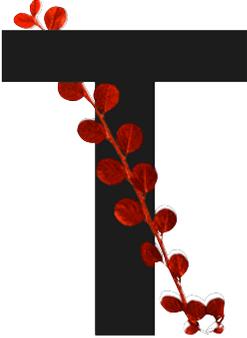


# Betula Papyrifera



he best way to dispose of the tops is to lop them so that the large branches will come into contact with the soil. They will then decay readily, will offer but little danger from fire, and will help to improve humous conditions in the forest.

—*Silvical Leaflet 38: Paper Birch*,  
Gifford Pinchot, 1908

White birch,  
White rot.

Cells spun  
With need,  
The whale-white  
Mass expands,  
And fanning ejecta  
Prepare to breed.

Absent of  
Light or ken,  
The saprophyte whispers  
Rhymes in the bole.  
Mycelia loosen  
The dread thing until:  
Quiver,  
Unspool,  
Let go.

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Image: Jeanette Compton.