

Winter Trees

Larry D. Thomas

As if etched on glass, they loom
against the bright, bluish-white light
in bold relief. Their angular limbs
meander this way and that,

knobby and gnarled from having borne
the fickle machinations of the seasons.

The stark flesh of their trunks
is blotched with the badges

of survival. In the hard repose
of men who've been through war,
draped with the ill-fitting
cotton of a hospital gown,

each waits till his name is called
when he'll climb the tarnished
pole of his cane and shuffle
unattended to his x-ray.

Larry D. Thomas, a Navy veteran and the 2008 Texas Poet Laureate, has published twenty-three print collections of poetry, including *As If Light Actually Matters: New & Selected Poems* (Texas A&M University Press, 2015). He resides with his wife and Long-haired Chihuahua in Las Cruces, New Mexico.