

Sulfur Springs Loop, Paris Mountain State Park
Anne Waters Green

The trail snakes through mountain terrain. Trees felled by wind or ice, uprooted by rain, lie worn, stripped. Nubs of former limbs spike like whittled spears.

Decades of storms have littered this park built by men coming of age in the Great Depression. Remnants of their work survive, ragged shapes

marked by gales' blusters and sleet's pings. An oak stands tall, bare. Two forked limbs stretch heavenward like the cruxifixus dolorosus of the thief who died

pleading to be remembered. A log, hollow, decaying, rests beside the path, four openings along its bole as holes of a flute. What airs do spring's breezes

play wending those apertures, what marches blare from summer thunderstorms, what elegies as winter's snows swirl with only huddling deer to hear.