

## COLIN BROWNE / A Capillary Manifesto

11 November 2010

Suppose there is a mast erected, so that one-ninth of its length stands  
in the ground, twelve feet of it in the water, and five-sixth of its  
length in the air, or above water; I demand the whole length?

—*Daboll's Schoolmaster's Assistant* (1842)

One wakes, opens eyes. It's dark and still. Horizon is a notch of melon. He reaches to  
his side.

One puts an infant on her hip, takes up her stick and walks out into the street.

One's outrunning buddleia water.

What's as bonny, as buttery, or bends like the branch called a stick?

Who's as loyal? What pleasure to compare to the peeling of a skookum wand?

What is its equal as defender, driller, handle, hoe?

What's as void of sorrow, shame or rue, as impervious to turning?

Or, more shapely, tapered by wind, and light?

Many lights make hand work.

Stilt, spindle, wattle, weir.

Cane, stake, switch, spear.

Adam's scratcher, puddle plow, poker, pestle, chipped from cockpits. The cock is one,  
is it not, though its name's whispered.

A twig, and hardly silent.

A punt pole, and for Little John on his log.

Shaft, stave, strung to a bow.

Spun into flames.

Priest, porter, rib jumper.

A comfort to dogs.

Stick, I salute you!

Ur-tool, brother to rock, thing and thing's progenitor, I celebrate you.

Hoop-roller, beloved of boys, how you pleased me!

First descender, and then ascender, wedge before bull. Peg.

How you pleased me.

Thing and fetish in one.

Xylem inward, phloem outward, phloem inward, xylem outward. Green towers.

Honey green cambium, sapling, sipping and wicking.

One cell plus one.

A capillary manifesto then, as the dying and the near dying nourish us.

SINGING, for breathing

CAPERING, for walking

WEEPING, for watering

LISTENING, for talking

DESIRING, for intelligence and sensation

LOVING, for giving back

WINNOWING, for grace

A STICK, for its pungent green heart