

Vive les arbres

A little off the top, please. Yes, the sides have become rather bushy. Everyone sees me, so I want to look my best. How soothing the hum of the electric chainsaw around my branches, the soft swish to the ground of last summer's growth, the Alpine air blowing through my open crown. Some leaf discolouration? I feel alright. But you must admit, it has been hot. And the surrounding concrete pavement does sometimes make me thirsty. I shouldn't complain though. The metal grille surrounding my base keeps my root tops safe from wandering tyres. *Merde alors*, those motorists. They park everywhere, even in places they shouldn't, like up on pavements or against garage entrances.

You know, my position in central Geneva may have its drawbacks, but also its perks. My foliage is atremble just thinking about it. For first thing every morning during the heat of rippling summer I am misted with water from Lake Léman. Oh, the anticipation. I can feel the vibrations of the tanker van as it trundles down the Rue de Lausanne, the whoosh of water pumped high against us row of trees, first one, then another, until again our green is glistening, scrubbed of diesel dust and daily detritus. While the rising sun dries the dripping, I sense through the mycorrhizal network the pleasure of my companions. Our welcome shade, our respite against the serried blocks of flats, our home for happy birds. *Vive les arbres*. I stand the pollarded epitome of an urban tree.