

What Kind of Times Are These

By Adrienne Rich

There's a place between two stands of trees where the grass grows uphill
and the old revolutionary road breaks off into shadows
near a meeting-house abandoned by the persecuted
who disappeared into those shadows.

I've walked there picking mushrooms at the edge of dread, but don't be fooled
this isn't a Russian poem, this is not somewhere else but here,
our country moving closer to its own truth and dread,
its own ways of making people disappear.

I won't tell you where the place is, the dark mesh of the woods
meeting the unmarked strip of light—
ghost-ridden crossroads, leafmold paradise:
I know already who wants to buy it, sell it, make it disappear.

And I won't tell you where it is, so why do I tell you
anything? Because you still listen, because in times like these
to have you listen at all, it's necessary
to talk about trees.

Adrienne Rich, "What Kind of Times are These" from *Collected Poems: 1950-2012*. Copyright
© 2016 by The Adrienne Rich Literary Trust. Copyright © 1995 Adrienne Rich. Reprinted by
permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc..

Source: *Dark Fields of the Republic: Poems 1991-1995* (W. W. Norton and Company Inc., 1995)