

Jim Daniels

THEY

Yesterday a guy cut the tree down
in front of the apartments across the street

and hauled away the wood in his pick-up.
March 1. For no good reason. Well, he

got paid, that's his reason. I call the building
owner *they*. The owner's never been identified

on the premises. He had some other guy paint
in bright road-yellow **NO PARKING** directly

on the street. What if everybody did that?
What if Johnny No-Parking traveled the country

painting **NO PARKING** on every curbside
in front of every house in America? You live

in a city? You know people kill over parking.
Here, we've got the parking chair. You put it

in front of your house and dare anyone to move it.
What's he going to do with all that wood?

The owner just eliminated a nice chunk of shade
for half his tiny box apartments this summer.

They're going to pave over everything now. One person
who owns 32 units is a *they*. The tree would have

flowered in about three weeks. You get attached
to other people's trees when you look at them

every day. One man with a chainsaw is a he
with an asterisk. Depending on how much gas

and his intentions. The crude, giant yellow letters
mock me, more visible now than ever. I imagine

it reads **NO BARKING** just to make me laugh,
just so I don't miss the flowers that were

on their way.