

Walk notes 3.21.14

*The tree that falls over the creek  
leaves a hole, makes a bridge.*

I wrote these lines two days ago, fixing my gaze up Lookout Creek at an ancient Douglas fir with its root ball on the eastern banks and its crown on the west. Today I've traced my way back along the precarious mossy gravel bar to the tree itself on whose trunk I now sit, legs pointing towards the roots, looking straight down the trunk. To my left, the creek comes rushing around a sharp easterly bend before turning south; pouring around this bend in the same direction, morning light follows the water. To my right the creek hurries southward and away over smooth gray stones, little white caps over the gravel. On the far bank just downstream is a smooth clay wall etched with waterlines past, overhung with drooping ferns and pads of moss and, higher than anything else around, the firs.

Now the first pool of light is collecting on a small cluster of mossed stones upriver, on my side of the creek. A few high wisps of hanging moss on the opposite bank, too, catch the light in their webs. The sound of the water is so loud that it is difficult to hear anything else, and—somehow—to notice anything else in the presence of so complete a sound. Other familiar sounds from my city life rise up as specters from this music: the drone of airplanes; the two-part *cuh-clunk* of a truck's tires driving over a metal plate in the road; the sounds of people walking, speaking; plates re-stacked in the cupboard, two at a time, from the drying rack; the clink of a pen dropped on linoleum over and over again. And even as I am rinsed—scoured—by this water doing what water does, the light is filling up the forest behind me and beside me without so much as an exhalation of breath.

Except for the songbirds I could hear on the trail, I've seen and heard few creatures here. The water is loud but the forest is hushed, and I get the sense that any animal I might encounter became aware of my presence the moment I stepped on the path. Here, it seems, we all value our privacy.