Half the Forest is Night

– for the creatures of old growth

Half the forest is night. Inaudible. Yet for the adapted & adept, starlight and *skritchès* must suffice.

And listening near truffle-flesh, night-lives hear the faint, faint gnawing of subterranean voles, the squirrel that glides in,

scurries upward, then glides again. Each life a risk. The owl’s beak breaks into large, dark minds. Squirrels’ incisors break into the thrush’s equal eggs. Under the long rains moss and lichens swell. Half the forest is now water.

Warm-blooded lives retreat: bats tuck beneath slabs of bark; gliders go back to moss-packed nests.

The rain-full air sweeps between monumental fir boles, not half so dark nor half so silent as that nest of moss

where a dozen gliders warm their blood, their huge eyes dark as star-globes, interstellar space.

This half the forest is less ours, even, than the day’s. We barely know its possibilities,

our own, our dreams.

- Bill Yake