

TODD GILENS, 2011

I came to the Andrews to reflect on, and write about, [a particularly difficult public artwork](#).

The Andrews was a place of deep integration, which helped me in fundamental, even physical ways to develop my thoughts.

But the forest was also sprinkled with the practices and machinery of science. While my reflection on the artwork took an expository and rational form, my experience in the forest called up a different approach. The four poems following are from that aspect of my residency.

Long Term Composition

Growth-clicks, my growing
fingernail drowned by fungi's
deafening roar,
each gap and breach
a world trade attack in damp soil.

Stillness, quiet, softness - ha!
the enchantment of trolls. Liars, Thieves!
our colored flags and plastic tape will out you,
scars disguised as cuteness.

Nearby: a guitar
Spanish cedar, ebony, Indian rosewood,
steel frets oxidized to warm Spruce-heart orange,
ivory from the tusks of Africa.

Half-buried in leaves
the guitar trembles,
begging for warmth
of thigh, armpit, hands.

Then it dreams itself a stone
sequestered in roots
colonized by moss
contentedly deaf to itself.

Forests of such guitars play the trolls to sleep.
Trees listen as if to nothing
heads in the ground
legs in the sun.

The symphony plays on,
a tune of variable dimensions.
Known without being heard,
watched without understanding.

From time to time researchers appear,
stirring enchantment with flags and swords
amidst guitars and their
silent mineral dreams

Alder Exchange

I am going shopping would anyone like to come?

Why not over there, it's just as nice

Of course, thank you

Now, what had been thought of as spider is damselfly
Is egg casing is protein inhibitor

Catching the light today

What channel are you on?

Ninety-six, or ninety-seven I think

Why don't you come over later for tea?

Thank you, that would be nice

It seems the weather is turning. With what's left, the condo project will have
a field day

I can't see anymore. I'm giving my books to the library

Now that we are all together I'd like to say a few words of thanks

Log Jam

I need a vacation
From this relation

Must I wait for something dramatic
An affair, an unexpected torrent

Neither do I like the thought of slow decay
I must find another way

Poem #3

It is true that things
Sometimes really happen

Trees fall over
Floods mess with rocks and branches
Fungi and invertebrates
Do their patient work

Stillness is a door
Perfectly clear from both directions
On each side, appearances

To one side what may happen
To the other what might have been

The door itself
We sometimes name
lily, apparatus, dewdrop, bone

Because of the door's perfect clarity
Names slide off
Either towards completion
Or regret

Piled at its base
A compost of experiences
Attests that stillness moves
Not with things
But through them