

Joan Maloof

A Short Poem Early on a Fall Morning

The bracken is brown,
the maiden's hair is turning gray,
you poets, with your list of names,
you will become silent when the snow falls.

A. J. Andrews Forest, November 2007

Joan Maloof

Log Decomposition

The dead in a real forest belong,
they are beautiful there.
They die in each other's arms,
or their bones shatter,
as they hit the ground.

Or their lumps have become
so rancid and strange
that you are not sorry
to see them go.

There are no two deaths alike
when they come at their own time.
When a life is over, then,
all that's left is light.

In a real forest trees do not have wounds
straight-lined like surgery.
The dead here have been murdered
and lie like corpses in a mass grave.

The clues are plastics and metals
in shades that don't belong.
The victims, cut at the ankles
and laid at the feet of the living ones.

Those left standing cannot run or turn away.
Mosses cover the bodies with a blanket of green,
out of respect, but the trees
can only drop needles and seeds.

The clothed apes have visited the bones
year after year, discussing,
their elegant experiment.
But the study will never be over, not even then.

*A. J. Andrews Forest, Reflection Site 2
November 2007*

Joan Maloof

Lookout Creek

What has this forest air shaken loose?
Last night I dreamt of my first lover;
for the first time in thirty years.
You might find this long,
but the soft moss on that limb
has been here longer.

When the sky is your ceiling your thoughts are ...
but beneath the canopy you change your mind.
The closer ceiling changes everything.
This, you're thinking, is where you belong.

To be wrapped again in those aerial arms, is right.
And here, when things die, they do not disappear.
The body becomes a bridge to the other side
The most delicate mushroom
Alive for the space of a song.

AJ Andrews, Ecological Reflections Site 1

November 2007

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Clearcut

Humans love the sun on a cold morning,
so do young Doug-firs,
insects in song,
and little winter wrens.

The men in the machines have given us sun,
but have taken away
liverworts, magic,
and most of the mushrooms.

A woodpecker flies by
with no place to land.
The pale stumps he sees
are dead as rocks.

Healing can be imagined,
but I will not witness it.
Only at this place do I want time to hurry,
only here the years do not go fast enough for me –
no matter how old I may be.

*A. J. Andrews Forest, Reflection site #3
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