

Half the Forest is Night

– for the creatures of old growth

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