

Traveling without Reservation

On a backroad, the only vacancy,
as last light evaporated
from tops of trees,
we paused to look and listen
anxiously about, to know the land a little
before we slept.

Forest birds had taken cover
in the tented places, long needles and bark floors
padding the silence.

From the ground, darkness came on,
stirrings of night animals
sure of their way
reaching us—imagined or real.

We fled to ourselves, places taut
and pulsing, sleep a scant coverlet
for senses that longed for release . . .
to touch home.

Morning would bring a wet yellow light
through the green.

It would be the world again.

But for now, we would think of words
unspoken in our ritual living—

hair moss bloodroot

lichen heartwood.

Underground rivers and caverns
would become the archives
of being. For this night,
we would dream and breathe
in another history.

—Dixie Partridge