



THE WOODS AFTER RAIN

The damp trail through the woods
Becomes more lost each year,
Runs over the rocks and roots,
Through waves of deep-piled moss,
A static sea,
Land-roll of the forest floor.

Here once for a loaf of bread,
I took an enchanted way
Through path turn pebbled stream,
And brought back shoes
Wet with the overflow
Of twig and berry, rock-drip,
Some touch of sea,
Or ooze of blackened pools
Where leaf and dead ferns rot.

Darkness held off,
But silence closed me round,
For birds had hidden away;
The crowding trees, vivid with lichen's jade
On ink black trunks,
Made a green gloom,
A tunnel for a ghost.

I might have felt alone,
Yet walked companioned, friended,
As if I, too, shared the rough mothering
Of island earth,
Fed as a root on scanty nourishment,
And drew from her wild marriage with salt
wind
Close kinship, strange adoption—
My own foot-fall
Now native here.

Hortense Flexner, 1990