

The nurse-log.

2014-15

An impression of the Quinault and

Hoh rain forests.

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Sun and air.

From ten thousand meters
Sun shines on a rucked blanket
Of bright white storm clouds

Rain-clouds dripping.

Misty, dark below
Storm clouds rush up the valley
Enshrouding the trees

Wind shaking forest.

Between cloud and earth
The forest canopy heaves
Blowing in the wind

The snag.

A bleached spire rising
Stripped bare and grey
Shivering in squalls
Stumpy branches knocking against still-
living neighbors
Failing roots still holding against the blast

The tree tossing.

A fir,
a hundred feet tall,
swaying at the top, whipping back and forth,
the shushing of the wind through its
branches and
the clatter as they strike each other

Saplings in a row.

A dozen saplings
All bits of the same flesh
Reborn in a row

Huckleberry.

The huckleberry
Grows a cloud of little leaves
And tiny red berries

The fern.

Poking through the moss
on a tree, little wood-ferns
peer down on clumping sword-ferns

The nurse log.

Spongy, crumbling, damp
A long hump in the forest floor
Still, unassuming

Moss.

Trees branches dripping green
Outlines of trunk, stick, log
All softened, smoothed

Roots twining.

All the bushes' roots
From the large to the threads
Winding together

Slow fire.

Faint white filaments
Mold and fungus and rot
The slow fire that burns
A hundred years

The duff.

Uncountable needles
Dry and waxy and brittle
Falling year on year

Drops from ferns.

Mist collects on fronds
Vapor to silver shimmer
To one drop falling

Grit.

Dig underneath the needles and twigs
Down a few inches
To the wet gritty soil underneath
Sand, sharp little stones,
Black and white and grey

A puddle.

In a low spot,
Water collects in a little pool,
Reflecting bits of grey sky above
Diffracted into circles as a drop falls

Running water.

Drops collecting drops
Flowing together, merging bit by bit
Into a rivulet that jumps off stones
And scours out its channel in the forest floor
Heading down hill and out
To merge with the stream, the river, the bay