

Fir and Gold

By Gregory JM Kasunich

Consider the Douglass Fir, if you will
(and please, take a moment and do)

For you see- This tree, a common woodland emissary,

perhaps even synecdoche,
for the entirety of the forest itself.

A sylvan, sentinel, (somewhat unremarkable)
in its innumerable prevalence.
Portends a precious piece of ancient programming.

You see- As their towering existence wanes,
and the end draws neigh,
(as it is will all things that live and die, on this wet and rickety rock)
they begin to divest their savings, their stock,

decathect from their fortunes amassed over their five, or six, or ten centuries of production
Their sugars and saps, and nutrients and carbons are passed

Donated, allocated, through mycorrhizal networks, their fortunes proliferated
Down down deep in into the ground

Down through the roots, into the soil, to be bequeathed
(not just to their brothers and sisters and uncles and cousins of the Fir family)
no, but to the pines of all kinds,

the stalk straight Ponderosas,
the treacherous Hemlocks,
the downy western Larchs
the fragrant Redceders

You see dear readers- They give of their bodies, what has been taken is returned,

And all that was earned is dispersed so that the entire forest may bud, and blossom, and
spurn on the next cycle of existence.

And through the quiet work of the dutiful fungi,

the diligent decayers, and purveyors of precious messages

Signals are sent, to nascent seedlings,
fortifying them and steeling their defenses against
the entropic indifference of the elements.

You see- We know this, the scientists have studied, and observed,

decoded and codified the findings, and yet, when we breathe our last,

Those who have amassed the most,
do not adopt the example of the fir,

But instead, hoard and hide their goods and golds and spices and oils
and separate their bodies from the soil,

And go to the grave, their fortunes not shared but locked away
Their name in time forgotten, and their legacy just another page

In a book of human follies so shameful, with only ourselves to blame,

You see- the forest has learned what we have not, that we, these poor fleshy frames are not

One of many separate suffering names,

but we are, for better or worse

all the same.