Ancient Fir, Climbing

at the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest

Carabinered to a braided rope and dangling ten feet off the ground, things change,

like suddenly there are too many questions about the physics of friction versus gravity,

but the shy, awkward boy zips through space, waves from above the first fan branch eighty feet higher than ground. You have game you say, the only matter is repose into harness,

lift the ascenders, push against the stirrups body bent, extending, bent againagainagain,

an inchworm climbing. You pray to the physics of friction, you pray to the molecular bonds of rope. Twenty sweaty minutes later you touch fan branch’s built soil, rub lichen,

lobelia and fern, then find yourself shaking laughing man’s soft hand on this wispy April day, wind and rain sweeping in.

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